

THE
CAMBRIDGE EDITION
OF THE WORKS OF
SCHOPENHAUER

The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics



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ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER
The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics

The purpose of the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Schopenhauer is to offer translations of the best modern German editions of Schopenhauer's work in a uniform format suitable for Schopenhauer scholars, together with philosophical introductions and full editorial apparatus.

Arthur Schopenhauer's *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics* (1841) consists of two groundbreaking essays: *On the Freedom of the Will* and *On the Basis of Morals*. The essays make original contributions to ethics and display Schopenhauer's erudition, prose-style and flair for philosophical controversy, as well as philosophical views that contrast sharply with the positions of both Kant and Nietzsche. Written accessibly, they do not presuppose the intricate metaphysics which Schopenhauer constructs elsewhere. This is the first English edition of these works to re-unite both essays in one volume. It offers a new translation by Christopher Janaway, together with an introduction, editorial notes on Schopenhauer's vocabulary and the different editions of his essays, a chronology of his life, a bibliography and a glossary of names.

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GENERAL EDITOR

Christopher Janaway

Titles in this series:

The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics
translated and edited by Christopher Janaway

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TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY
CHRISTOPHER JANAWAY



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THE TWO FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF ETHICS

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General editor's preface

Schopenhauer is one of the great original writers of the nineteenth century, and a unique voice in the history of thought. His central concept of the will leads him to regard human beings as striving irrationally and suffering in a world that has no purpose, a condition redeemed by the elevation of aesthetic consciousness and finally overcome by the will's self-denial and a mystical vision of the self as one with the world as a whole. He is in some ways the most progressive post-Kantian, an atheist with profound ideas about the human essence and the meaning of existence which point forward to Nietzsche, Freud and existentialism. He was also the first major Western thinker to seek a synthesis with Eastern thought. Yet at the same time he undertakes an ambitious global metaphysics of a conservative, more or less pre-Kantian kind, and is driven by a Platonic vision of escape from empirical reality into a realm of higher knowledge.

Schopenhauer was born in 1788, and by 1809 had gone against his family's expectations of a career as a merchant and embarked on a university career. He completed his doctoral dissertation *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* in 1813, then spent several years in intensive preparation of what became the major work of his life, *The World as Will and Representation*, which was published at the end of 1818, with 1819 on the title page. Shortly afterwards his academic career suffered a setback when his only attempt at a lecture course ended in failure. Thereafter Schopenhauer adopted a stance of intellectual self-sufficiency and antagonism towards university philosophy, for which he was repaid by a singular lack of reaction to his writings. In 1835 he published *On the Will in Nature*, an attempt to corroborate his metaphysics with findings from the sciences, and in 1841 two self-standing essays on free will and moral philosophy, entitled *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*. A large supplementary second volume to *The World as Will and Representation* appeared in 1844, accompanied by a revised version of the original which now appeared as Volume One; then in 1851 another two-volume work,

Parerga and Paralipomena, a collection of essays and observations. Only in the 1850s did serious interest in Schopenhauer's philosophy begin, with a favourable review appearing in an English journal and a few European universities offering courses on his work. In this final decade before his death in 1860 he published a third edition of *The World as Will and Representation* and a second edition of *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*. After Schopenhauer's death his follower Julius Frauenstädt produced the first six-volume edition of his works in 1873, providing the basis for many subsequent German editions up to the *Sämtliche Werke* edited by Arthur Hübscher, which we use as the basis for our translations in the present edition.

Though Schopenhauer's life and the genesis of his philosophy belong to the early part of the nineteenth century, it is the latter half of the century that provides the context for his widespread reception and influence. In 1877 he was described by Wilhelm Wundt as 'the born leader of non-academic philosophy in Germany', and in that period many artists and intellectuals, prominent among them Richard Wagner, worked under the influence of his works. The single most important philosophical influence was on Nietzsche, who was in critical dialogue throughout his career with his 'great teacher Schopenhauer'. But many aspects of the period resonate with Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory, his pessimism, his championing of the *Upanishads* and Buddhism, and his theory of the self and the world as embodied striving.

Over the last three decades interest in Schopenhauer in the English-speaking world has been growing again, with a good number of monographs, translations and collections of articles appearing, where before there were very few. More general trends in the study of the history of philosophy have played a part here. There has recently been a dramatic rise in philosophical interest in the period that immediately follows Kant (including the German Idealists and Romanticism), and the greater centrality now accorded to Nietzsche's philosophy has provided further motivation for attending to Schopenhauer. Yet until now there has been no complete English edition of his works. The present six-volume series of Schopenhauer's published works aims to provide an up-to-date, reliable English translation that reflects the literary style of the original while maintaining linguistic accuracy and consistency over his philosophical vocabulary.

Almost all the English translations of Schopenhauer in use until now, published though they are by several different publishers, stem from a single translator, the remarkable E. F. J. Payne. These translations, which were done in the 1950s and 1960s, have stood the test of time quite well

and performed a fine service in transmitting Schopenhauer to an English-speaking audience. Payne's single-handed achievement is all the greater given that he was not a philosopher or an academic, but a former military man who became a dedicated enthusiast. His translations are readable and lively and convey a distinct authorial voice. However, the case for new translations rests partly on the fact that Payne has a tendency towards circumlocution rather than directness and is often not as scrupulous as we might wish in translating philosophical vocabulary, partly on the fact that recent scholarship has probed many parts of Schopenhauer's thought with far greater precision than was known in Payne's day, and partly on the simple thought that after half a century of reading Schopenhauer almost solely through one translator, and with a wider and more demanding audience established, a change of voice is in order.

In the present edition the translators have striven to keep a tighter rein on philosophical terminology, especially that which is familiar from the study of Kant – though we should be on our guard here, for Schopenhauer's use of a Kantian word does not permit us to infer that he uses it in a sense Kant would have approved of. We have included explanatory introductions to each volume, and other aids to the reader: footnotes explaining some of Schopenhauer's original German vocabulary, a glossary of names to assist with his voluminous literary and philosophical references, a chronology of his life and a bibliography of German texts, existing English translations and selected further reading. We also give a breakdown of all passages that were added or altered by Schopenhauer in different editions of his works, especially noteworthy being the changes made to his earliest publications, *On the Fourfold Root* and the single-volume first edition of *The World as Will and Representation*. A further novel feature of this edition is our treatment of the many extracts Schopenhauer quotes in languages other than German. Our guiding policy here is, as far as possible, to translate material in any language into English. The reader will therefore not be detained by scanning through passages in other languages and having to resort to footnote translations. Nevertheless, the virtuoso manner in which Schopenhauer blends Latin, Greek, French, Italian and Spanish extracts with his own prose style is not entirely lost, since we have used footnotes to give all the original passages in full.

Editorial notes and references

Three kinds of notes occur in the translation:

- (1) Footnotes marked with asterisks (*, ** and so on) are Schopenhauer's own notes.
- (2) Footnotes marked with small letters (*a*, *b*, *c*) are editorial notes. These either give information about the original wording in Schopenhauer's text (in German or other languages) or provide additional editorial information. All (and only) such *additional* information is enclosed in brackets []. All footnote material *not* in brackets consists of words from the original text.
- (3) Endnotes marked with numerals 1, 2, 3. The endnotes for both essays are towards the end of the whole volume, and indicate variations between the different texts of the essays published during Schopenhauer's lifetime.

Schopenhauer's works are referred to by the following abbreviations:

Hübscher SW 1–7	<i>Sämtliche Werke</i> , ed. Arthur Hübscher (Mannheim: F. A. Brockhaus, 1988), vols. 1–7.
FR	<i>On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason</i> [Über die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde].
PP 1, 2	<i>Parerga and Paralipomena</i> [Parerga und Paralipomena], vols. 1 and 2.
WN	<i>On the Will in Nature</i> [Über den Willen in der Natur].
WWR 1, 2	<i>The World as Will and Representation</i> [Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung], vols. 1 and 2.

Unpublished writings by Schopenhauer are referred to thus:

GB	<i>Gesammelte Briefe</i> , ed. Arthur Hübscher (Bonn: Bouvier, 1978).
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- HN* 1–5 *Der handschriftliche Nachlaß*, ed. Arthur Hübscher
(Frankfurt am Main: Kramer, 1970), vols. 1–5.
- MR* 1–4 *Manuscript Remains*, ed. Arthur Hübscher, trans. E. F. J.
Payne (Oxford: Berg, 1988), vols. 1–4 [a translation of *HN*
vols. 1–4].

Passages in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* are referred by the standard method, using A and B marginal numbers corresponding to the first and second editions of the work. Other writings by Kant are referred to by volume and page number of the monumental 'Akademie' edition (Berlin: Georg Reimer/Walter de Gruyter, 1900–), in the form Ak. 4: 397. Translations are based on those in the relevant volume of the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. References to works of Plato and Aristotle use the standard marginal annotations.

Introduction

In 1841 Arthur Schopenhauer published a book entitled *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics* (*Die Beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik*), containing a pair of complementary essays, which the present volume re-unites for the first time in English translation. The original publication of the essays was the culmination of a train of events that began in April 1837 when Schopenhauer found a prize competition advertized in the *Halle Literary Journal* (*Hall'sche Litteraturzeitung*). The challenge was to answer a question posed in Latin: *Num liberum hominum arbitrium e sui ipsius conscientia demonstrari potest?* that is, 'Can the freedom of the human will be proved from self-consciousness?' Writing largely in his native German, Schopenhauer answered that question in the negative, in a thoroughly argued, powerful and scholarly essay which situated his own contribution in relation to a broad sweep of philosophical and literary predecessors, and left room for the thought that the denial of freedom is ultimately unsatisfying because of our definite feelings of responsibility – responsibility for our character, our very being, he claimed, not for our particular actions, all of which are casually determined. He submitted this essay, *On the Freedom of the Human Will* (*Über die Freiheit des menschlichen Willens*) to the learned academy that had set the question, namely The Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences in Trondheim. At their meeting of 26 January 1839 the Society 'crowned' the essay with the prize of a gold medal, and made its author a member of their Society – most of which information can be gleaned from the wording Schopenhauer proudly placed on the title page of *The Two Fundamental Problems*.

This success and recognition clearly meant a great deal to Schopenhauer, for although he was approaching his fifty-first birthday, and although it was already twenty years since he had published *The World as Will and Representation*, by any standards a remarkable and substantial philosophical work, he had enjoyed no acclaim, no public, no academic career, and he had been living as an independent, albeit wealthy, scholar, actively researching

and writing, but publishing only one other book (*On the Will in Nature*, 1836), which had likewise failed to gain much of an audience.¹ (When *On the Will in Nature* was reprinted in 1854 the situation had begun to improve, as he reported in the Preface with the memorable Latin phrase '*legor et legar*', 'I am read and I will be read'.) Schopenhauer's long intellectual isolation was heightened by the school of thought prevailing in German academic philosophy in the first part of the nineteenth century, that of German Idealism, and its powerful head, G. W. F. Hegel. The style of Hegelian philosophizing – which Schopenhauer saw as using pomposity and convolution to impress and mask its vacuity – and its optimistic claims to knowledge of various absolutes were anathema to Schopenhauer, who prized clarity and directness and always cared to root his philosophical claims in what he took to be concrete and empirical instances. Academic philosophy had passed him by since a failed lecture course he had given at Hegel's University of Berlin in 1820, and he was full of bitterness towards what he saw as the self-serving, overly abstract and fundamentally dishonest mode in which university philosophy tended to be conducted. Diatribes against Hegel (a 'charlatan'), his predecessor J. G. Fichte (a 'windbag') and their acolytes in the university system found their way into all his published works. So the honour of being accepted into a learned academy in Norway was one that he valued, and he still speaks of his gratitude with evident warmth in the Preface to the second edition of *The Two Fundamental Problems* two decades later in 1860, the year of his death.

Freedom of the will, then, was the first fundamental problem of ethics. But what of the second problem and the second essay? The occasion for the latter was strikingly similar. The Royal Danish Society of Sciences set another prize question in the same literary journal, enveloped in a longer piece of Latin. Their question ran: 'Is the source and basis of morals to be sought in an idea of morality that resides immediately in consciousness (or conscience) and in an analysis of the remaining basic moral concepts that arise out of it, or in another cognitive ground?' Schopenhauer's response to this question, once he had carefully dissected it, is a rich and penetrating essay, entitled *On the Basis of Morals* (*Über die Grundlage der*

¹ In 1830 he had also published a Latin version of his treatise *On Vision and Colours*, entitled 'Theoria colorum Physiologica, eademque primaria' (in Justus Radius (ed.), *Scriptores ophthalmologici minores*, vol. 3). The original version of this (*Über das Sehn und die Farben*) had been published in 1816, following a period of not entirely harmonious collaboration with Goethe over the latter's colour theory. Schopenhauer later played down the issue of the Latin version, saying that it could not really count as 'breaking the silence' between 1818 and 1835 (see *WN*, 'Introduction', first footnote).

Moral). In it Schopenhauer argues that all previous attempts to find a theoretical foundation for ethics have failed to tally with the deliverances of experience, and puts forward his own account: it is solely the incentive of compassion residing in the characters of human beings – the incentive that impels them to seek the well-being and alleviate the suffering of someone other than themselves – that gives actions any true moral worth. And the fundamental principle that expresses the criterion of moral worth is therefore ‘Harm no one; rather help everyone to the extent that you can’, whose two halves correspond to the virtues of justice and *Menschenliebe*, or human loving kindness. Inside the essay nests a long chapter (Chapter 2) which more or less constitutes an essay in its own right: a close critical reading of the highly influential account of ethics put forward by Immanuel Kant in his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and other works. Repeatedly citing passages from Kant’s argument, Schopenhauer rips it apart, rejecting the whole notion that ethics must take duty, obligation and command as its central notions, arguing against the link Kant makes between the ethical and the rational, against his exclusion of non-human animals from the ethical sphere, and complaining that Kantian ethics rests on a confection of artificial concepts rooted in nothing that corresponds to human experience.

This second essay was duly submitted to the Danish Royal Society. It was the only response they received to the question they had set – and yet it was ‘not crowned’ (nicht gekrönt), as Schopenhauer defiantly states on the title page of *The Two Fundamental Problems*. They refused to award it a prize! The grounds given for the non-crowning, published in another passage of rather rambling Latin entitled *Judicium* (Judgment), were somewhat strange. Schopenhauer published the whole of this judgment at the end of *The Two Fundamental Problems* and devoted the bulk of the 1841 Preface to protesting against and rebutting it. His outrage was boundless, bursting out of the first Preface, and resounding still in the 1860 Preface to the second edition of the essays. The Danish Society complained that the theme of the prize question ‘demanded the kind of investigation in which the connection between metaphysics and ethics would have been considered first and foremost’, but that Schopenhauer had mistakenly thought the task was to set up some principle of ethics. Schopenhauer’s devastating analysis of the original question and its preamble allows him to state ‘I have proved incontrovertibly that the Royal Danish Society really did ask what it denies having asked; and on the contrary that it did *not* ask what it claims to have asked, and indeed could not even have asked it.’ To

demand an account of *the* connection between ethics and metaphysics would have been meaningless, because there is no metaphysics that can be assumed as a unanimous starting point. So the question would first have had to stipulate that a metaphysics be expounded, and only then that an ethics be developed from it. That would have been the business of more than a single self-contained essay, and is expressly not what the original task was: when Schopenhauer put forward a principle of ethics, he was properly answering the question. The Judgment makes further criticisms of the essay's form and substance which Schopenhauer robustly rejects as false or confused. But finally, presumably not dreaming what they would unleash, the Society added: 'Nor should it go unmentioned that several distinguished philosophers of recent times are mentioned in such an indecent fashion as to provoke just and grave offence.'

The response in both the Prefaces is torrential. 'These "distinguished philosophers" are in fact – *Fichte* and *Hegel*!' Fichte, according to Schopenhauer, was a plodding 'man of talent' whose philosophical views are easy to show up as weak and absurd; Hegel, he says, was far beneath even Fichte in ability, yet unparalleled in his audacity. Schopenhauer impugns the Danish Society's judgment and integrity using a blend of argument and rhetoric all his own. Here is a glimpse of the resultant outpouring:

If a union of journal writers sworn to the glorification of the bad, if paid professors of Hegelry and yearning private teachers who would like to become such professors, indefatigably and with unparalleled shamelessness proclaim this very ordinary mind but extraordinary charlatan to all four winds as the greatest philosopher the world has ever possessed – then that is worth no serious attention, still less so given that the blatant intent of this miserable business must gradually become evident even to those of little practice. But when it goes so far that a foreign academy wishes to adopt that philosophaster as a 'distinguished philosopher', and even permits itself to vilify the man who honestly and unflinchingly opposes the false fame, deceitfully obtained, bought and composed out of lies, with *that* degree of emphasis that is alone proportionate to the impudent promotion and obtrusion of what is false, bad, and mind-corrupting – then the matter becomes serious. (15)

If to this end I were to say that the so-called philosophy of *Hegel* was a colossal mystification that will provide even posterity with the inexhaustible theme of ridiculing our age, a pseudo-philosophy that cripples all mental powers, suffocates real thinking and substitutes by means of the most outrageous use of language the hollowest, the most devoid of sense, the most thoughtless, and, as the outcome confirms, the most stupefying jumble of words, and that, with an absurd passing whim plucked out of the air as its core, it is devoid of both grounds and consequences, i.e. is neither proved by anything nor itself proves or explains anything, and what is more, lacking any originality, a mere parody of scholastic realism and

of Spinozism at the same time, a monster which is also supposed to represent Christianity from the reverse side, in other words

a lion in front, a serpent behind, and in the middle a goat

– then I should be right. If I further said that this ‘distinguished philosopher’ of the Danish Academy scrawled nonsense as no mortal ever did before him, so that anyone who could read his most celebrated work, the so-called *Phenomenology of Spirit*, without having the impression that he was in a madhouse, would belong in it – then I would be no less right. (15–16)

Schopenhauer rounds off his case by inserting his own translation of several acerbic pages of fiction from the seventeenth-century Spanish author Baltasar Gracián, in which we witness a showman exhibiting a braying ass to a craven public who swear it is a splendid eagle, then a tiny man whom they are coerced into proclaiming a giant – except that once the act leaves the stage all are eager to agree that they have been seriously duped. In the second edition Preface Schopenhauer is able to say with some justification that the philosophical public of 1860, given the waning of Hegel’s influence, has likewise begun to come to its senses about the ‘distinguished philosophers’:

even though they are being sustained for a little while longer, with failing powers, by poor philosophy professors who compromised themselves with them long ago and who need them besides as material for lectures, they have nonetheless sunk very greatly in public estimation, and Hegel in particular is heading with strong strides towards the contempt that awaits him in posterity. (29)

Although the two Prefaces tell us next to nothing about the content of Schopenhauer’s ethics, they are among the best exemplars of his character and intellectual persona and worth reading for that alone.

SCHOPENHAUER’S ETHICS IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS PHILOSOPHY

The two essays in this volume are not the only places where Schopenhauer’s ethical views are to be found. For a complete picture the fourth and final book of *The World as Will and Representation*, volume 1 (published in 1818) should be consulted, as should the numerous supplementary essays in the Fourth Book of volume 2 of that work, first issued in 1844.² The definitive shape of his ethics is really given by its first statement in volume 1 of this, his ‘main work’. But ethics is there the culminating part of an

² A short chapter in *WN*, entitled Reference to Ethics (‘Hinweisung auf die Ethik’) is also relevant, as is an essay ‘On Ethics’ (‘Zur Ethik’) included in Schopenhauer’s *PP* 2, ch. 8.

overall philosophical system of extraordinary ambition. The four books of this work range through epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of mind and action, aesthetics and philosophy of art, to ethics, the meaning of life and the philosophy of religion, in an attempt to account for *the world*: the nature of our cognition or knowledge of the world and how it relates to that world itself, the nature of our existence and the existence of everything in nature, what is and is not of value in existence, the pain of the human condition and the possibility of deliverance from it. The difficulties here for the reader interested primarily in Schopenhauer's contribution to ethics are, firstly, that a whole metaphysical system has to be worked through and comprehended, and secondly that his views on free will and responsibility, action and character, moral worth, compassion, and the virtues of justice and loving kindness risk becoming lost amid a wealth of other material to which their immediate relation is not always obvious.

The essays of *The Two Fundamental Problems* were submitted anonymously to their respective academies: Schopenhauer could not refer to his earlier work nor, as he remarks, could either essay refer to the other. This had the effect of thrusting the issues of freedom and morality into the limelight unencumbered by other elements of his thought, and Schopenhauer gives a far more comprehensive and persuasive treatment of these issues than he had achieved before or ever undertook later.³ Rather than introducing his ethical views as offshoots of a metaphysical world view, he had to present them on commonly agreed grounds, 'starting from facts either of outer experience or of consciousness'. So the connection of this 'psychological' basis with a more fundamental metaphysics could now be 'suggested at most in accessory fashion'. Schopenhauer presents this reversal of method as a kind of disadvantage, but for the reader who – in his day or ours – is interested in the ethical issues but not *au fait* with the metaphysical system, the essays make matters considerably easier. Meanwhile, neither essay abandons the metaphysics altogether, since, as we shall see, both manage to leave us with profound questions designed to point decisively towards it.

The briefest summary of *The World as Will and Representation* will help us here. Schopenhauer firstly allies himself with *transcendental idealism*. According to this doctrine, originally developed by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), the objects that we experience as outside of us in

³ At the beginning of his supplementary essays on ethics in *WWR* 2, ch. 40, Schopenhauer states that he will not revisit the two principal subjects of freedom of the will and the foundation of morals, thus leaving himself more space for other ethical topics. He presumes that the reader wishing to address the former topics will read *The Two Fundamental Problems*.

space and time, causally interacting in lawlike ways, constitute a world of *appearance*, and we do not experience them *in themselves*. Empirical objects, the objects of which any subject has conscious experience, are a species of the subject's representations (*Vorstellungen*) and what this realm of objects can contain is necessarily limited, shaped by the form of the mind itself. The mind must organize its objects as related to one another in space, as contemporaneous or succeeding one another in time and as entering into regular patterns of cause and effect. This, for Kant, and for Schopenhauer, is a truth *a priori*, something we can know independently of confirmation through experience. It is a ground rule for the possibility of experience itself. So the familiar world of empirical things is a world of objects *for a subject*, which is to say a world consisting of the subject's representations, and not a world that can be regarded as existing in itself, independently of the way it appears and must appear to an experiencing mind.

For Schopenhauer, the human mind, and indeed any conscious mind, receives data through the bodily senses and structures them using what he calls the understanding (*Verstand*) or intellect (*Intellekt*). Without this structuring we would register only a conglomeration of subjective sensations, but with it we attain a picture of material objects persisting in time, occupying space and serving as the causal origins of observed changes and of our sensations themselves. However, two features that are emphasized in both the essays on ethics differentiate Schopenhauer's account of cognition quite markedly from Kant's. One is that the understanding or intellect cognizes the world in a manner that is not essentially conceptual. Adopting another technical term of Kant's, Schopenhauer maintains that what the understanding gives us is intuition (*Anschauung*), which essentially means perceptual awareness of particular objects in space and time. For Kant, the senses gave us an array of intuitions, and the understanding provided concepts under which it actively ordered the intuitions to produce an experience of a world of objects. Only creatures capable of forming concepts and making judgments could have such experience in the full sense. But for Schopenhauer animals such as a dog or a horse, who are incapable of forming concepts, are as much aware of a world of objects as any human subject: they perceive objects in space and time as we do, being simply incapable of making judgments, forming thoughts or carrying out reasoning, and hence being unable to comprehend anything more than what is immediately present in their perception.

The other, related feature that differentiates Schopenhauer from Kant is that the capacity to form and manipulate concepts discursively to frame thoughts and arguments, the capacity which for Schopenhauer is reason

(*Vernunft*), though indeed unique to human beings, confers on them no special ‘dignity’, nor has any special connection with freedom or morality. Reason’s concepts are secondary representations abstracted from the primary material given in intuition, and reason itself is merely instrumental in value: it enables us, unlike other animals, to be guided in our actions by a vast range of motives that involve thoughts about what is not present immediately in intuition. But a rationally motivated action is no more free than one motivated by fear, thirst or lust – it is just determined by a more complicated cause. And a rationally motivated action is not guaranteed to be any more morally good than one otherwise caused, for, as Schopenhauer says in ch. II, §6 of *On the Basis of Morals*, ‘Rational and vicious can combine very well, and indeed it is only through their combination that great, far-reaching crimes are possible. Irrational and noble-minded likewise co-exist very well’ (151). The demotion of reason from any foundational role in characterizing human behaviour or explaining what has moral worth, and the consequent levelling that occurs between human beings and all other animals, are vital distinguishing features of Schopenhauer’s ethics and of his philosophy as a whole.

Returning to the narrative of *The World as Will and Representation*, we find Schopenhauer maintaining that the idealist account of the world as representation, though true, is seriously inadequate. For by definition it does not tell us what we are in ourselves, nor what anything in the world apart from us is in itself. All this remains a ‘riddle’. Schopenhauer proposes to solve that riddle by claiming that the essence, the very being in itself of all things is will (*Wille*). The world that appears to us as representation is, in itself, will. Representation gives us the world as it is empirically, diverse, plural, spatio-temporal, lawlike and open to investigation. Will is what that same world and we ourselves are metaphysically – one and the same essence underlying all the many empirical appearances. We must make sense of the world and ourselves from within, not merely experience its manifestations in an ordered fashion from a standpoint detached from reality. This is the central message of the second book of *The World as Will and Representation*. Arguing from our immediate cognition of our own actions, Schopenhauer suggests that whenever we are conscious of ourselves, we are conscious of ourselves as willing something. This unique inner consciousness is to give us the vital clue to our own essence: it is that we strive towards ends. The intrinsic core of our being is will. Schopenhauer uses this term ‘will’ very widely, including in it not only desires, but actions, emotions and affects, and non-conscious or ‘blind’ processes that can be described as end-directed. Thus the will that is our essence manifests itself in our body

and its many functions, including the brain and nervous system, with the result that the self-conscious subject of cognition around which Kantian epistemology is structured is to be explained as the result of physiology, but that physiology is ultimately explicable in metaphysical terms as the manifestation of an underlying striving force. Schopenhauer then extends this idea to the whole of nature, claiming that we can make sense of the world as such by seeing its essence as a kind of blind striving manifesting itself in multiple instances within our experience. Thus the one world is both representation and will.

In the essays on ethics this notion of the world-will is alluded to only in passing. For example in Chapter III of the *Freedom* essay Schopenhauer has arrived at the claim that there is a natural force present in things that lack cognition and merely respond to causes pure and simple; he then speculates as follows:

whether this inner condition of their reaction to external causes . . . might perhaps, if someone wanted to depart from appearance in general and enquire into what Kant calls the thing in itself, be identical in its essence with that which in ourselves we call the *will*, as a philosopher of recent times has really wanted to demonstrate for us – this I leave to one side, though without wanting to contradict it directly.⁴

Thus the two essays on ethics do not presuppose the claim that the world is will. We shall, however, find that certain aspects of the will-theory are vital to the essays. One is the idea that in each *individual* there is a will that constitutes his or her character or essence, underlying and partly determining his or her particular actions. Other aspects that we have already touched on are the continuity of essence between humans and all other beings, and the de-centralization of rationality, no longer the essence of the individual but merely one way in which a more fundamental will becomes manifest in certain contexts.

As *The World as Will and Representation* progresses the tone becomes more sombre. The individual's existence is dominated by will: desires and needs are incessant, shaping all our perception and understanding of the world, ends can never finally be fulfilled, suffering is ever-present, but the will drives us on to strive and want more things that can never properly satisfy us even if we attain them. Willing goes on perpetually and without final purpose: it is built into us and into the whole fabric of the world. Throughout nature one being dominates and destroys another, the world-will tearing itself apart, says Schopenhauer, because it is a hungry will and there is

⁴ p. 55. In the edition of 1860 he adds a footnote saying 'It is evident that here I mean myself and could not speak in the first person simply because of the required incognito.'

nothing for it to feed on but itself. This dark vision of existence, which has led to Schopenhauer's title as a philosopher of pessimism (though this is not a term he uses for himself), is not explicitly thematized in the essays on ethics; nor is its brighter counterpart, the temporary remedy against the life of striving and suffering that he finds in the pure, will-less consciousness of aesthetic experience (the theme of *The World as Will and Representation*, third book). However, the ethical (and metaphysical) culmination of Schopenhauer's systematic philosophy in the fourth and final book of his main work is worth considering briefly in the present connection.

If ethics in the broadest sense considers what is of value in human life, then Schopenhauer's ultimate ethical position is as follows. Although we exist as empirical individuals separate from one another and so naturally regard the good as consisting in what we can attain through the activity of our own individual wills, this is a mistaken view. When fully understood, the life of a human individual does not and cannot contain anything of true value. Worse, the existence of everything – as a manifestation of the pointlessly self-perpetuating and self-devouring will – is something ultimately to be lamented. To exist as a manifestation of will is to strive without fulfilment, and hence to suffer. Attaining an end through willing brings us nothing of positive value – it just temporarily erases a painful lack or absence. New desires flood in almost immediately to plague us with their non-satisfaction. And if no new desires arrive we are tormented by boredom. Because will is our essence, 'All life is suffering' – and consequently we need 'salvation' or 'redemption' from it. Such redemption can be achieved only by the will within us 'turning' and 'denying itself'.⁵ Schopenhauer has argued that the notion of a 'highest good' makes no sense.⁶ But, he says, if we wish to bring that expression back from retirement and apply it to anything, then it must be to the denial of the will: cessation of desires and wants that relate to the individual we find ourselves as, detachment of identification from this individual, elimination of one's personality, one's natural self with its in-built attachment to the ends of living and willing, and contemplation of the whole world, with all its strivings and pains, as if from nowhere within it. Calling on mystical pronouncements from diverse cultural traditions, Schopenhauer argues that only such a radical transformation, occasioned by a deep and rare knowledge of the ubiquity of suffering and the illusoriness of the individual, can restore any value to our existence. It is a matter for some debate how this vision of the worthlessness of human existence and the redemptive power of self-abolition

⁵ See WWR 1, §§56, 69 (Hübscher SW 2, 366, 472–3).

⁶ Ibid., §65 (Hübscher SW 2, 427–8).

relates to what we might call the 'ordinary' ethics concerning motivation, responsibility and the moral worth of actions that Schopenhauer explores in the two essays. We shall return to this issue below.

THE ARGUMENT OF SCHOPENHAUER'S ESSAY ON FREEDOM

Faced with the question 'Can the freedom of the human will be proved from self-consciousness?', Schopenhauer first subjects its terms to a process of clarification: 'What does freedom mean?' and 'What does self-consciousness mean?' Freedom, he states, can be physical, intellectual or moral. *Physical freedom*, the original and most easily grasped sense of the term, is simply the absence of material hindrances. So, for example, in this sense we can even speak of the free course of a stream, meaning its not being obstructed by rocks, weirs or the like. When we move on to beings that act and therefore are conceived as having a will, we can still talk of physical freedom in the same way: animals, including human beings, are physically free if there is no material hindrance to their doing what they will. *Intellectual freedom* (dealt with in an appendix at the end of the whole essay, 110–112) is present in so far as the intellect is functioning in an ordinary way, and the individual is at no abnormal cognitive disadvantage, perceiving and understanding the world correctly. We lack such freedom in a variety of cases. First, our general cognitive abilities may be seriously awry, as in 'madness, delirium, paroxysm and somnolence'; second, we may simply mis-perceive in a single instance 'in a clear cut and blameless error, e.g. when one pours out poison instead of medicine, or takes one's servant coming in at night for a robber and shoots him'. Thirdly, there can be partial lapses of intellectual freedom 'through affect and through intoxication'. Powerful feelings impressed upon us by our experience of external events can eclipse our full understanding of what we are doing. Intoxication disposes us towards affects by weakening abstract thinking. Such cases diminish our responsibility and blameworthiness, though typically in the latter case we may be blamed for the state of intoxication itself.

The main body of the essay, however, concerns *moral freedom*. Schopenhauer makes use of a notion that recurs on virtually every page of the essay, that of a motive (*Motiv*). By this he means precisely an object of cognition, an occurrent perception or thought that 'is the material of the act of will, in the sense that the act of will is directed towards it, i.e. aims at some alteration in it, or reacts to it'.⁷ Motives can hinder acts of will just as much

⁷ See the beginning of ch. 2 of the essay, p. 40.

as physical obstacles: Schopenhauer first mentions as instances ‘threats, promises, dangers and the like’. Understanding what is likely to happen if one acts as one wills is often enough to restrain one from so acting. But in this case, unlike the case of physical freedom, there appears to be no absolute compulsion. Some individuals in some circumstances are not prevented from acting by the strongly motivating belief that they will die, for example, or that they will be tortured: their will is undeterred. So the problem of moral freedom is posed: Given what falls within the cognition of a given individual at some time, *could* they have pursued a different course of action at that time than the one they did? Could they have *willed* something different? Was their willing free? But now something strange has happened to the concept of freedom that we began with. For we said willing beings were free if nothing prevented them from acting in accordance with their will, but now it looks as if we have to answer the question ‘Can you will in accordance with your will?’, which, as Schopenhauer points out, ends in an absurd regress. To make it workable, the concept of freedom has to be modified; it then becomes equivalent to ‘the absence of all necessity in general’. This negative sense of freedom can be applied without absurdity to the will, so that the central question finally emerges as: ‘Is human willing subject to necessity or not?’

Schopenhauer next defines ‘necessary’, leaning on what he had expounded in his earliest publication, the doctoral dissertation of 1813, *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*. There Schopenhauer argued that the notion of a ‘ground’ (*Grund*) was ambiguous.⁸ It is true that ‘everything has a ground for its being as it is’. But not all grounds are of the same type. For instance, a judgment has empirical evidence or a prior judgment as its ground, the ground of a figure’s being a triangle is its having three sides, a cause is the ground of its effect, a motive is the ground of an action – and we should be careful to distinguish between the various kinds of case. However, one point on which Schopenhauer is insistent is that the relation between any ground and its consequent (that which it is the ground of) is *necessity*. And conversely the definition of necessity he uses throughout the essay is ‘necessary is that which follows from a given sufficient ground’. Now the issue has become more precise again: Do human actions follow from a given sufficient ground? If they do not, they are free; if they do, they are not free.

⁸ In the title of *FR* the word *Grund* occurs, so that strictly, since it is all about different kinds of ground, we would be right to talk of the Principle of Sufficient Ground. But the translation ‘Principle of Sufficient Reason’ is retained here as the more recognizable, standard philosophical term.

The Norwegian Society's question, then, is interpreted as asking whether self-consciousness can resolve this issue. Schopenhauer next analyses self-consciousness. His position here is that when I am conscious of myself, of my inside or interior, as he often puts it, as opposed to some object that presents itself as external to me, then I find states such as

decisive acts of will that immediately become deeds, ... formal decisions ... desiring, striving, wishing, longing, yearning, hoping, loving, enjoying, rejoicing and the like, ... not-willing or resisting, and detesting, fleeing, fearing, being angry, hating, grieving, suffering pain, in short all affects and passions. (38)

All of these he classes as 'movements of the will' of different polarities, tones and intensities. We do not, he suggests, encounter ourselves as cognizing beings in our own cognition, a claim he repeats in Chapter IV of *On the Basis of Morals*:

through inner sense we cognize the continuing series of our strivings and acts of will which arise on the occasion of external motives, and finally also the manifold weaker or stronger movements of our own will, to which all inner feelings can be reduced. That is all: for the cognizing (*das Erkennen*) is not itself cognized in turn. (250)

So the self that meets us 'within' is fundamentally conative and affective, concerned with trying, striving, acting and feeling positively or negatively towards things. We might think, then, that if self-consciousness taps exclusively into the will, then it will be the prime means by which we discover the will's freedom, if it has freedom, or, if it has none, its total subjection to necessity. But no: Schopenhauer argues that, although it is an easy and almost unavoidable mistake to *think* that self-consciousness reveals the will's freedom, self-consciousness is simply incapable of deciding the crucial question. The truth is that by examining our 'inside', leaving out any considerations concerning the external world, we ascertain nothing at all about the relation between the grounds (motives) of what we will and what we will itself.

The ordinary person recognizes the following as true: 'I can do what I will.' And it is this that the ordinary person – and many a philosopher who is also prone to the same error – takes to be freedom of the will. But freedom of *doing* is crucially different from freedom of *willing*. This is Schopenhauer's central insight. If you had willed to turn to the right, and were not restrained, paralysed, drugged and so on, then you would have done so; equally, if you had willed to turn to the left, you would have done so. 'I am free', says the inexperienced thinker, 'because it is up to me what I do, it just depends on my will, and that I can know in self-consciousness.'

But this tells us nothing about whether we could equally have willed to turn to the right or willed to turn to the left. Suppose on a particular occasion I willed to turn to the left and did so: *could* I equally well have willed to turn to the right? We cannot know this on the basis of self-consciousness alone, Schopenhauer claims, because here we reach a kind of bedrock:

If we now say: 'But your willing itself, what does that depend on?' then the person will answer out of self-consciousness: 'On nothing at all but me! I can will what I will: what I will, that I will.' . . . [P]ressed to the extreme here, he speaks of a willing of his willing, which is as if he spoke of an I of his I. We have driven him back to the core of his self-consciousness, where he encounters his I and his will as indistinguishable, but nothing is left over to judge them both. (44–5)

This is the burden of Schopenhauer's succinct second chapter: it is natural to feel that we are conscious of our will as free, but that is really an illusion since all we can know in self-consciousness is that we can do what we will. As he comments, that answers the question that was set. Can the freedom of the human will be proved from self-consciousness? No it cannot. But Schopenhauer seeks to strengthen his case further. What if we look beyond self-consciousness? If we find from examining our cognition of the external world that there is no such thing as a willing free from necessity, then we would not just be contingently unable to prove freedom of the will from self-consciousness; rather we would learn that it is *impossible* to have evidence of freedom of the will in self-consciousness. It is impossible for us to be inwardly conscious of something that simply does not exist anyway.

This shift from self-consciousness to 'consciousness of other things' gives rise to the longest chapter of the freedom essay, Chapter III, in which Schopenhauer examines what we can know through our cognition of the world of external objects, and specifically whether we ever encounter anything occurring without necessity, without a sufficient ground. The short answer is again in the negative. Nowhere in the objective world is there an exception to the rule that whatever happens, happens necessarily as the consequent of some ground. So there is no free will in the world of our outer experience, the intuited or empirical world. In addition to holding this as a universal principle that can be known a priori, Schopenhauer seeks to establish a continuity throughout nature, by examining in turn inanimate nature, plants, animals in general and finally human beings. At every point in this taxonomy there is causality at work. Schopenhauer distinguishes sheer cause and effect, which operates at the level of physics, then stimulus and response, to which plants and animals are susceptible,

then motive and action, the sphere of creatures with minds that can cognize the world and provide mental representations that function as motives for their willed behaviour, then finally rational motive and action, the unique province of human beings. Rationality occurs where a creature has the capacity to develop concepts in addition to mere intuitions of the here and now. When we have concepts, we can make judgments, think about past and future, make inferences and act upon deliberation. Because of the complexity of thought and action in this final case, and because the connection of actions with their causes is often quite remote, we are tempted to see human action as of quite another kind from the simple cases of cause and effect. But human action, as part of what occurs in the natural world, is as much subject to the necessity of consequent following on ground as any other kind of event. Action brought about by rational deliberation is not different in respect of its necessity from a non-rational animal's moving upon seeing its prey, or from a plant's moving upon the stimulus of sunlight, or even from one billiard ball's moving upon impact from another. In a bravura passage Schopenhauer imagines a stretch of water lying in a pond and thinking to itself that it *could* rise up in a jet, rush down in a waterfall and so on, but that it is freely resting where it is. It would be no different if a man were to think that he *could* be doing all sorts of daring things X, Y and Z, 'but am going home with just as much free will, to my wife'.

So Schopenhauer has argued that since all motives, whether rational or not, are a species of causes, they give rise to our willed action with necessity. To complete the picture, however, he has to give some account of what it is that the motives operate upon. And here he turns to the notion of *character*. In explaining the behaviour of anything when causes exert an influence on it, we must presuppose that the constitution of the thing, of whatever kind it is, interacts with the cause to produce the necessary effect. To use an example similar to some of Schopenhauer's own, the heat of the sun produces effects on water, wax, growing fruit and human skin, but while the heat remains the same, the difference in the effects depends on the nature of the thing affected. The effect of motives on human action similarly depends on the character of the individual human being. Schopenhauer is quite certain that this character is individual – no humans have the same character – that it is something discovered empirically, even for the person whose character it is, that it is inborn, and that it is constant and never changes. He produces anecdotal evidence for these latter claims, some from popular sayings, some from poets and dramatists, some from authorities in classical antiquity. By this means he at least establishes that it has often

been believed that character is individual, inborn and unchanging, if not that it genuinely is so. But even if his case is less than fully convincing, the overall picture is not altered: the actions of an individual human being are determined by a combination of motives that enter his or her cognition, together with the particular character upon which they impact. So, taking a person who acted in a certain way on a certain occasion, if we imagine that same person, character unchanged, having the same thoughts and experiences in the same circumstances, then we must conclude that their action would be just the same again. In this sense they do whatever they do necessarily.

There is some room for moral improvement in Schopenhauer's view: we can teach people new motives, by enlarging their knowledge of the world and enabling them to understand better both their own characters and the situations in which they act. If the same person in the same circumstances has different cognitive states, then they may well act quite differently. But what Schopenhauer rules out is that their character has changed:

no moral influence reaches further than the correction of cognition, and the undertaking to remove the character faults of a human being through talking and moralizing and thus wanting to re-shape his character itself, his intrinsic morality, is just the same as the proposal to transform lead into gold by external influence, or to bring an oak tree, by careful tending, to the point of bearing apricots. (72)

Schopenhauer also calls this intrinsic unchanging character the individual's *will*. It is opposed to the intellect, the malleable medium of cognition, and constitutes the core, the very being of the person him- or herself. This conception of the self is also carried through, as we shall see, to the essay *On the Basis of Morals*.⁹

Having answered the Prize Question head-on with his examination of self-consciousness and elaborated reasons why the human will could not possibly enjoy any absence of necessity, Schopenhauer moves into another gear in Chapter IV of the essay, which he entitles 'Predecessors'. It is a display of comprehensive scholarship and literary sensitivity – both hallmarks of Schopenhauer's persona as much as his stubborn argumentative style and intolerance of nonsense. From faint intimations of the problem of free will in Aristotle (though in all the ancients proper awareness of it is absent), to the defining Christian debates in Augustine and Luther, then on to a number of more obscure early modern thinkers through to Hobbes, Spinoza, Hume, Priestley, Voltaire, Kant and Schelling, with contributions

⁹ Schopenhauer's most comprehensive treatment of the will–intellect relationship is to be found in *WWR* 2, ch. 19.

from Shakespeare, Schiller, Walter Scott and a recent edition of *The Times* thrown in, Schopenhauer portrays a protracted debate about free will continuing through European culture and culminating in the very view he has expounded: all human actions proceed with necessity from a combination of their motives and their character.

However, the final chapter of the essay on freedom takes us in a different and more challenging direction:

If in consequence of our presentation so far we have entirely removed all freedom of human action and recognized it as thoroughly subordinate to the strictest necessity, we have now been led in that very process to the point where we will be able to grasp *true moral freedom*, which is of a higher kind. (105)

What is unsatisfying about the account so far is its exclusion of the fact that we *feel responsible* for what we do, and not in an obscure or trivial way; rather we have an 'unshakeable certainty that we ourselves are *the doers of our deeds*'. So unshakeable is this sense of ourselves that even the conviction that determinism is true could not remove it. Even the reader wholly convinced by Schopenhauer's theoretical arguments and examples will not try to duck responsibility for his or her actions on the grounds that they followed necessarily from his or her occurrent motives and character. This seems an accurate picture of our attitude to our own actions. There are a number of routes one could pursue from this point. Perhaps our 'certainty' of being responsible for our deeds is an insuperable illusion; perhaps it is an attitude more central to our self-understanding than any commitment we could have to the objective standpoint from which our actions are seen as determined, so that the truth or falsity of determinism should matter less to us than is commonly thought.¹⁰ Schopenhauer, however, has a third alternative: the unshakeable certainty is not an illusion, we really are responsible for our deeds, and so must in some sense really be free; but because determinism is true of everything that occurs in the empirical realm of space and time, we must regard our particular actions as not free. Schopenhauer negotiates this predicament with the help of two distinctions. He distinguishes first our actions from our self, or our doing from our being, and secondly the empirical realm from the transcendental.

For all his previous argument, Schopenhauer has not shown that there is an absolute necessity attaching to the occurrence of any particular human action. Suppose that someone is hungry and steals an enticing-looking apple from a market-stall. It is not written into the laws of the universe

¹⁰ As argued by P. F. Strawson in 'Freedom and Resentment', in *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays* (London: Methuen, 1974), 1–25.

that such an event must take place here and now: rather, it is just because the motives and the circumstance worked upon *this human being* in particular that this act of stealing took place:

quite another action, indeed the action directly opposed to his own, was after all entirely possible and could have happened, *if only he had been another*: this alone is what it depended on. *For him*, because he is this one and not another, because he has such and such a character, no other action was indeed possible; but in itself, and thus objectively, it was possible. So the *responsibility* he is conscious of relates only provisionally and ostensibly to the deed, but fundamentally to *his character*: it is for *this* that he feels himself responsible. And it is for *this* that others hold him responsible . . . The deed, along with the motive, comes into consideration merely as evidence of the character of the doer, but counts as a sure symptom of it, by which it is discovered irrevocably and forever. (105–6)

For the second of the two distinctions mentioned Schopenhauer leans heavily on Kant, who had offered to show that freedom does not contradict the principle of causal determination throughout nature.¹¹ We can regard ourselves in two different ways: as empirical beings who are part of the world of nature, and as moral agents. Kant's idea is that we can preserve the sense of ourselves as moral agents if we consider ourselves as being more than what we appear as empirically – that is, if we consider what we are in ourselves, something we can grasp only in pure thought of the intellect, not in experience. This will allow us to speak not just of our *empirical* character, but also of our *intelligible* character. The latter is what we can think of ourselves as being in ourselves, beyond what we are in the realm of appearance. Since beyond that realm there is no space, time or causality, our intelligible character is uninfluenced by nature and can be regarded as freely initiating courses of events without being part of them.

Schopenhauer accepts Kant's distinction between empirical and intelligible characters, proclaiming it 'among the most beautiful and most profoundly thought products of this great mind, and indeed of human beings ever' (107), and modifies it for his own purposes, treating it in a realist manner: my intelligible character, for him, is that single real essence of mine that underlies all my particular actions and manifests itself in them all alike. So Schopenhauer infers from the undeniable fact that we *feel* guilty about what we have done that we must be free, but because we cannot be free with respect to our empirical manifestations, we must be free with respect to our real underlying character: 'Where *guilt* lies, there must *responsibility* lie also: and since the latter is the sole datum from which

¹¹ See *Critique of Pure Reason*, A532–558/B560–586.

the conclusion to moral freedom is justified, *freedom* must also lie in the very same place, that is in the *character* of the human being' and therefore

we have to seek the work of our *freedom* no longer in our individual actions, as the common view does, but in the whole being and essence (*existentia et essentia*) of the human being himself, which must be thought of as a free deed that merely presents itself for the faculty of cognition, linked to time, space and causality, in a plurality and diversity of actions. (108)

Schopenhauer's solution, then, is that we are empirically determined, but transcendently free, and hence justifiably feel responsible for what we are. How the metaphysics of something existing (and acting) outside of space, time and causality will work out is not made clear here. We shall return to this issue briefly in the final section of this Introduction.

THE ARGUMENT OF ON THE BASIS OF MORALS

The second of Schopenhauer's essays on ethics, despite being the one that failed to win a prize, is an equal, if not greater, achievement. It combines an account of why ethics has allegedly never been set on a secure footing, a diagnosis of the stagnation and malaise of early nineteenth-century ethics in particular, a detailed and probing critique of Kant's moral theory, reflection on the ethical doctrines of several of the world religions, and an original account of the incentives of egoism, malice and compassion, the latter presented as the sole foundation for all behaviour that is evaluated as morally good.

Schopenhauer argues that in the past ethics could count upon support from religious dogma and so could at least appear to be firmly grounded, but that since Kant's influential 'destruction' of philosophical theology and proposal to ground theology in ethics rather than the other way round, theological doctrines no longer have the persuasive power required to give authority to any ethical theory. Kant's own ethics has come to be the orthodoxy for the past sixty years at Schopenhauer's time of writing, and so this is what 'must be cleared away before we embark on another path' (121). Consequently the first major chapter of the essay (Chapter II) is an extensive demolition of the Kantian edifice – though Schopenhauer warns us not to skip over this as a merely negative exercise, but to consider the critique of Kant as an essential preparation for his own positive views that follow in Chapter III.

Kant's primary error, according to Schopenhauer, is to conceive of ethics as fundamentally a matter of imperatives, of oughts, duties and laws. In

asking for a re-orientation of ethics away from these notions, Schopenhauer's position resembles that taken by Elizabeth Anscombe in a paper from the 1950s that has come to be regarded as important in re-generating interest in virtue ethics.¹² Kant simply assumes from the outset that it is legitimate to talk of a moral law and of absolute obligations placed upon human beings, obligations which hold even though no one may ever have acted upon them or willingly entered into them. Schopenhauer complains first that ethics must start from what is observed to happen in human behaviour; and second that the idea of absolute laws or commands is a transparent hangover from the Judaeo-Christian notion of the Ten Commandments, made even more obvious by Kant's occasional retention of phrases such as 'thou shalt'. This is a serious problem because in general Kant proposes to give ethics a grounding wholly independent of theology. Later, when we find Kant attempting to give rational justification to our idea of God on the grounds of his ethics, Schopenhauer retorts that he resembles a magician 'having us find an object in the place he had cleverly slipped it into before' (130). For Schopenhauer one cannot speak of laws without a foundation in specific human institutions, and cannot speak of an ought without its being conditioned by some reward or punishment. An unconditional or absolute ought is even a contradiction in terms. So, if we really wish to stand on ground free of tacit theological assumptions, we must reject Kant's fundamental conception of ethics from the start. Here there is a clear foreshadowing of elements of Nietzsche's critique of Judaeo-Christian morality.

Schopenhauer pictures Kant as obsessed with the distinction between the a priori and the empirical. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant had used this distinction to make 'the most brilliant and influential discovery' in his revisionary account of metaphysics (133); now he is determined to apply it to ethics, and to banish everything empirical from a foundational role, thus removing, in Schopenhauer's eyes, any power from his moral philosophy:

For morals has to do with the *real* acting of human beings and not with aprioristic building of houses made of cards, to whose outcomes no human being would turn in the seriousness and stress of life, and whose effect, therefore, in face of the storm of the passions, would be as great as an enema syringe at a raging fire. (145)

Even Kant's own followers have not appreciated the rigour with which Kant intends to proceed: they tend to say that the Kantian moral law is a 'fact of

¹² G. E. M. Anscombe, 'Modern Moral Philosophy', *Philosophy* 33 (1958), 1–19. A more recent criticism of the centrality of obligation in ethics is Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), ch. 10.

consciousness', but for Kant it cannot be such a fact, since then ethics would rest on something empirical, something anthropological. Schopenhauer charges that by removing anything empirical from his foundation for ethics, Kant leaves it floating in mid air 'like a spider's web of the most subtle, contentless concepts' (145). The concepts of a 'rational being', a 'moral law', an 'end in itself' and the 'dignity of human beings' all come in for criticism on like grounds, as does the 'innocent little kingdom of ends, which we can calmly leave aside as totally harmless' (165). As far as we know, there are no rational beings other than humans, unless Kant was thinking of the 'dear little angels', and Schopenhauer cannot accept the idea that rationality is the essence even of human beings, tracing its origin once again to an inherited metaphysical doctrine, that of the pure rational soul, which Kant himself officially rejects.

Many of Schopenhauer's criticisms of Kant are quite familiar. For example, he accuses Kant of propounding a moral law that lacks all content, and of perpetrating the 'apotheosis of unkindness' in apparently banishing 'feelings of compassion and soft-hearted sympathy' from the ideal moral agent (137). Schopenhauer responds to Kant's famous principle, 'Act only in accordance with that maxim, of which you can at the same time will that it should become valid as a universal law for all rational beings' as follows:

what *can* I really will, and what not? Obviously, in order to determine what I can will in the aforementioned respect, I need a further regulative . . . Now where is this regulative to be sought? – Impossible that it be anywhere else than in my egoism, this closest, constantly primed, original and living norm of all acts of will, that at least has the law of prior occupancy ahead of any moral principle. – The instruction – contained in *Kant's* highest rule – of how to find the real moral principle rests, then, on the tacit presupposition that I can will only *that* state in which I am best off. (156)

Schopenhauer alleges, in short, that Kant's imperative turns out to be hypothetical rather than categorical, and moreover that Kant secretly realizes this. His grounds for saying that I could not will maxims of injustice and unkindness must be that 'the law I set up for my *acting*, when I elevate it to being *universal*, also becomes a law for my *suffering*, and under this condition, as the potentially *passive* party, I definitely *cannot will* injustice and unkindness' (158). How else would it make sense to claim that I *could not* will injustice and unkindness as a universal maxim, unless I am thinking of myself as the vulnerable recipient of them? If I happened to be sufficiently strong, sufficiently secure or reckless that I could stop thinking of myself as potentially on the receiving end, then there would be no such impossibility.

Moving on to his own account of the basis of morals, Schopenhauer first entertains what he calls a 'sceptical viewpoint': the view that perhaps nothing is good or bad by nature, that morality consists solely in human conventions that exist to restrain and enforce behaviour, and that without the support of religious dogmas, and especially those of rewards and punishments in a life beyond the present, our moral beliefs would long ago have collapsed. Schopenhauer agrees that a great proportion of what we class as good actions proceed from the need for social reputation, and from egoistic fears and hopes to do with our own well-being. Without the 'muzzle' of the state and laws, human beings would, he claims, behave like so many tigers and wolves. Truly moral actions are indeed rare, in Schopenhauer's view, but that is different from claiming that nothing has genuine moral worth:

we do not have to rise up at once in holy zeal and put on armour as soon as a moral theorist raises the problem whether all honesty and justice might perhaps be at bottom merely conventional, and then, pursuing this principle further, is at pains to reduce all the rest of morals to more distant, mediate, but ultimately egoistic grounds . . . That is actually true and correct of the greatest portion of just actions . . . [I]t is also true of a considerable portion of actions done from loving kindness . . . But it is just as certain that there are actions of disinterested loving kindness and freely willed justice. (185–6)

– and it is the nature of these two fundamental virtues that Schopenhauer undertakes to describe in the bulk of his third chapter.

Note that Schopenhauer explicitly aims at description rather than prescription. He wishes to describe what is in fact morally good, using as evidence the attitudes of praise and blame that third-party onlookers tend to have towards different kinds of action, and the attitudes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with ourselves that we undergo as agents when we act in one way or the other. Schopenhauer's business is not to lay down moral rules and prescribe that everyone ought to follow them; indeed he falls short of saying that everyone ought to act in a morally good way, or even that everyone has reason to do so, concentrating instead on explaining what constitutes morally good action whenever it occurs. There is a general principle of all morality, for Schopenhauer, namely 'Harm no one; rather help everyone to the extent that you can' (which he consistently presents in its Latin form *Neminem laede; imo omnes, quantum potes, iuva*). This he calls the universal maxim of all moral actions and the highest principle of ethics. Now this principle consists of a pair of imperatives, so we may wonder whether Schopenhauer is here violating his own claim, used so

forcefully against Kant, that ethics has no business in being prescriptive or issuing commands. However, it rather appears that he is trying to locate the maxim, or injunction to oneself, that one will in fact be acting upon, explicitly or implicitly, if one is acting morally. This is what a moral person will, upon reflection, represent his or her actions as aiming to conform to.

Compassion (*Mitleid*) is the sole moral incentive for Schopenhauer, and stands opposed to two anti-moral incentives, egoism and malice. The characters of all human beings are largely egoistic, according to Schopenhauer, as are those of all animals. We cannot say that non-human animals are 'self-interested' (*eigennützig*), because to be self-interested one must be able to form plans and reason about means towards accomplishing them. Nevertheless Schopenhauer is happy to call animals egoistic, in that their core is an 'urge to existence and well-being' (190). So a human being, like other living things, is fundamentally egoistic. A human being 'wills to preserve his existence, wills it unconditionally free from pains . . . wills every pleasure of which he is capable, and even seeks where possible to develop new capacities for pleasure' (190). Actions from compassion are much rarer than egoistic actions. But we all contain in our character, according to Schopenhauer, an element of compassion alongside the anti-moral incentives. So we all have the potential to act morally as well as maliciously or egoistically, though our characters differ widely in composition and contain the incentives in greatly varying proportions. An extremely egoistic person will not generally act on the moral maxim, but be guided instead by 'Help no one; rather harm everyone if it brings you advantage', and the malicious person will tend to conform to the maxim 'Harm everyone to the extent that you can.'

Schopenhauer plots the three fundamental incentives against a simple schema, consisting of the dimensions of self versus other, and of well-being (*Wohl*) versus ill or woe (*Wehe*). Egoism's incentive is to seek the well-being of the self; that of malice is to seek the woe of the other. Compassion is the incentive that seeks the well-being of the other.¹³ If compassion is the dominant incentive of one's action, one will be seeking the kind of action that complies with the principle of helping and refraining from harming; but it is vital for Schopenhauer that one's being morally good in this way does not consist in one's recognizing and following a rule. Rather, being morally good consists in having a character which gives one a certain outlook towards other human beings (and indeed other sentient beings of

¹³ A fourth possible incentive is seeking one's own woe, which Schopenhauer does not mention in the *Essays*, an omission he rectifies in a footnote in *WWR* 2, ch. 48 (Hübscher *SW* 3, 697), stating that asceticism is this fourth incentive.

whatever kind), and a certain responsiveness to them. It is the goodness of character and the vision of the other's suffering as one's immediate concern that comes first; but the maxim of helping and not harming others also has an important role:

For although *principles* and abstract cognition in general are in no way the original source or prime basis of all morals, yet they are indispensable for a moral life, as the container, the reservoir in which the disposition that has risen out of the source of all morality, which does not flow at every moment, is stored. (205)

Good, noble-minded persons are naturally disposed to feel compassion, but once they adhere to the *Neminem laede* maxim through deliberative reflection, they have a more stable means of warding off the influence of the anti-moral incentives that are liable to be incited in all of us from time to time. The maxim helps the good to act compassionately even when they do not actually feel compassion in the here and now.

Schopenhauer recounts many narratives, some historical, some constructed, to provoke moral intuitions that square with his theory. Do we not find cruelty the most morally repulsive form of behaviour and is that not because it is the absolute reverse of feeling sympathy for the suffering of others and seeking their well-being? Can we imagine a person who is both morally good and lacking in compassion? Do we not find that acting compassionately is its own reward? And so on. Britain comes in for some complimentary remarks in Schopenhauer's discussions of the ending of the slave trade, in his view a large-scale example of the operation of compassion, and also for being at the forefront of concern for animal welfare, which he discusses in some detail. He contrasts Eastern religions favourably with the traditional teachings of Christianity and Judaism in this respect.

Schopenhauer takes the notion of *Mitleid* quite literally. *Leiden* is to suffer, and *mitleiden* is to 'suffer with': so he suggests that if I am the right kind of person I will naturally *feel* the other's sufferings, not merely apprehend them intellectually. But it is wrong to say that I am under any temporary illusion that the primary suffering is mine, or that I somehow suffer the other's pains in myself; rather, says Schopenhauer, 'it is precisely *in his* person, not in ours, that we feel the pain, to our distress. We suffer *with* him, thus *in* him: we feel his pain as *his*, and do not imagine that it is ours' (203). There are two different degrees to which another's suffering may be thus 'felt' and thereby become the immediate motive of my actions. In the first, the feeling of compassion intervenes to prevent sufferings that I might be about to inflict or permit: it 'calls out "Stop!" to me and places itself as a defensive shield before the other, which protects him from the injury that my egoism, or malice, would otherwise drive me to' (204). Thus

restrained, I act according to the maxim 'Harm no one', and so exhibit the genuine virtue of disinterested justice (to be distinguished from the kind of just action that arises from fear of consequences or hope of rewards). If compassion rises to a higher degree it can motivate me to act positively, in line with the other half of the moral principle 'Help everyone to the extent that you can.' Actions thus motivated display the other major virtue of loving kindness, or *Menschenliebe*. And for Schopenhauer only actions of justice and loving kindness have true moral worth.

One important question is how compassion is even possible. If egoism is the very core of all living things, who must strive after their own ends in order to live and reproduce – if, as Schopenhauer puts it in *The World as Will and Representation*, our essence is 'will to life' (*Wille zum Leben*) – how could we ever be motivated to act counter to this? Schopenhauer provokes the question himself by emphasizing that compassionate behaviour is exceptional and 'mysterious':

how is it at all possible for the well-being and woe *of another* to move my will immediately, i.e. in just the way that only my own otherwise does, that is, for it to become my motive directly, and further to become it even to such a degree that I give it more or less preference over my own well-being and woe, which is otherwise the sole source of my motives? (200)

We might be sceptical that such a thing ever really takes place. Would we not always be able to find a selfish motive of some kind behind all acts of justice and loving kindness? Schopenhauer answers by describing cases where it is hard to imagine anything other than a selfless motivation, notably the self-sacrifice of the Swiss hero Arnold von Winkelried at the battle of Sempach. Also, he says, even the most hard-hearted and selfish human being has experienced the motivation of pure compassion. Anyone who nonetheless remains sceptical as to the occurrence of actions thus motivated is, for Schopenhauer, effectively denying ethics any genuine subject-matter: his account is addressed rather to those who are prepared to concede that motivation by selfless compassion is at least a genuine occurrence. But in the end, he contends, the only true confirmation of his account of compassion will come from a fully worked-out metaphysics of the kind he is unable to give in a prize essay.

FROM ETHICS TO METAPHYSICS

So *On the Basis of Morals*, like its fellow essay, culminates in a short discussion of metaphysics. The only way to account for the occurrence of compassion, understood as feeling someone else's pain in his or her

person, lies in confronting the issue of individuation, the distinctness of one individual from another. Schopenhauer has suggested that someone who feels compassion for another sees less of a distinction between him- or herself and the other than the ordinary egoist, whose focus excludes the other's well-being or suffering except as wholly instrumental considerations. Now he pushes this up a level, arguing that morally good and morally bad human beings have different attitudes towards the very fact of individuality. The bad character

senses everywhere a strong dividing wall between himself and everything outside him. The world for him is an *absolute not-I* and his relationship to it a primordially foreign one: and because of that the fundamental tone of his mood becomes spitefulness, suspicion, envy, schadenfreude. – By contrast, the good character lives in an external world homogeneous with his essence: others for him are not not-I, but are 'I once more'. (254)

Which is the correct outlook? From the point of view of appearance, the way the world ordinarily presents itself to us in our experience in space and time, there are indeed distinct individuals. But space and time do not apply to the underlying thing in itself, which remains when our experience is taken away.

If, accordingly, plurality and difference belongs solely to mere *appearance*, and if it is one and the same essence that presents itself in everything that lives, then the construal that removes the distinction between I and not-I is not the erroneous one: rather the one opposed to it must be. (253)

So Schopenhauer's ultimate explanation for compassion's superiority over egoism and malice, and the explanation for its very possibility, is metaphysical: the compassionate person has an outlook more closely in tune with the allegedly deeper truth that the separateness of individuals is an illusion. It is not that the morally good person has to be a metaphysician and hold a firm and reasoned belief that individuals belong only to the realm of appearance – rather, he or she intuitively senses something that is in harmony with that alleged truth:

as a result practical wisdom, doing right and doing good, would coincide exactly with the most profound doctrine of the most far-reaching theoretical wisdom; and the practical philosopher, i.e. the just, the beneficent, the noble-minded one, would express through his deed simply the same knowledge that is the outcome of the theoretical philosopher's greatest profundity and most painstaking study. Meanwhile moral excellence stands higher than all theoretical wisdom, which is always merely patchwork and arrives on the slow path of inferences at the same goal as the former reaches in one stride; and someone who is morally noble, however

much he may lack in intellectual excellence, displays through his actions the deepest knowledge, the highest wisdom, and shames the greatest genius or scholar if the latter betrays through his deeds that that great truth has really remained foreign to him in his heart. (253)

In both the essays on ethics Schopenhauer leads the reader towards an end point where metaphysics has to be called upon to resolve a central issue. In the essay on freedom our feeling of responsibility is an indubitable fact, but we can find no justification for that feeling by examining what we are aware of in our self-conscious experience or cognition of the external world – hence we must invoke a timeless character, ‘my will as thing in itself’, as existing beyond the empirical realm. Schopenhauer can say that it is for *being* this, being *what I am*, that I feel genuine responsibility. In the essay on morals the chief outstanding problems, as we have seen, are how compassion, as Schopenhauer has characterized it, is possible, and what makes the compassionate character’s outlook superior to that of the ordinary egoist: both solved, Schopenhauer believes, by invoking the notion of a non-individuated essence lying behind or beneath empirical appearances. In Schopenhauer’s metaphysics proper, expounded in *The World as Will and Representation* but largely suppressed in the two essays, the central claim is that the will is the thing in itself. But note how in the two essays this basic idea is invoked in different ways. In the essay on freedom, the ‘in itself’, the will or fundamental character in question, is something unique to the human individual. In the essay on the basis of morals, there is an essence ‘in itself’ that is precisely not individual, but common to all living things. Schopenhauer runs the risk of contradiction here. If the thing in itself, by virtue of being outside of time and space, cannot be divided into distinct individuals, how can *my* character be merely what this particular individual, as opposed to all others, is in itself? In a later comment Schopenhauer acknowledges the difficulty, only to concede quietly that he is not about to resolve it:

Individuality does not rest solely on the *principium individuationis* [principle of individuation] and so is not *appearance* through and through, but rather it is rooted in the thing in itself, in the will of the unique being [*des Einzelnen*]: for his character is individual. But how deep its roots go here is among the questions I do not undertake to answer.¹⁴

So what, ultimately, is the worth of being morally good? Schopenhauer gives an answer in a letter to one of his most philosophically astute

¹⁴ *PP* 2, §116, Hübscher *SW* 6, 242.

correspondents, Johann August Becker:¹⁵ the value that moral actions have for the one who performs them is a ‘transcendental’ one; such actions lead him on ‘the sole path of salvation, i.e. deliverance from this world of being born, suffering and dying’. Schopenhauer reminds Becker that he expressly did not include this step in the essays on ethics, but had dealt with it in *The World as Will and Representation*.¹⁶ The person who is so morally good that the distinction between him- or herself and others begins to fall away, feels all the suffering throughout the world as if it were his or her own. This leads to resignation, brought about by sedation of the will or its recoil away from life. One grasps the utter lack of value in living and willing as an individual at all. Only by undergoing such an extreme redemptive transformation in consciousness, an extinction of the personality that consists in the cessation or self-negation of willing, can the individual’s existence attain genuine worth; and morality has value, ultimately, not in its own right, but as a step towards this self-denial of the will.

At the end of the freedom essay the individual’s very ‘being and essence’ is mysteriously called a ‘free deed’, and we hear that ‘the will is indeed free, but only in itself and outside of appearance’ (108). We cannot exactly dispel the mystery of this, but we can perhaps give the mystery a more determinate shape. Schopenhauer’s idea is that the world (or ‘the will’) freely manifests itself as me, along with countless other individuals, all undergoing and inflicting suffering. We are all facets of its striving made visible in space and time. As long as I will as an individual, I must feel responsible, and most importantly guilty, not just for being an expression of the will that underlies everything, but rather for being this particular, unique expression of it. By comparison with this feeling of guilt, the feeling of compassion takes me a stage further away from my attachment to individuality: when I feel compassion, rather than simply exercising my individual will and sensing there is something awry with so doing, I am alive to the will of others as having an import equal to mine or indeed greater than it. But this feeling ultimately has value only because it takes me a step nearer to an abandonment of my individuality, which Schopenhauer can express by saying that ‘the will’ which freely manifested itself as me, freely annuls itself in me. As we have said, this doctrine of the denial of the will and the obliteration of one’s personality makes no appearance in either of the

¹⁵ See *GB*, 220, letter to Johann August Becker, 10 December 1844.

¹⁶ He refers to *WWR* 1, §68 (Hübscher *SW* 2, 448) and *WWR* 2, ch. 48 (Hübscher *SW* 3, 696).

essays on ethics. Had Schopenhauer tried to include these aspects of his thought, it seems likely that he would have alarmed and antagonized the hostile academicians of Copenhagen still further, and mystified their more amenable counterparts in Trondheim – with what effect on their verdict we can only speculate.¹⁷

¹⁷ In a handwritten note on the title page of his copy of the *Two Essays* (1841 edition) Schopenhauer wrote that (according to a Dr Nordwall of Uppsala) the real judge of the essay in Copenhagen had been a Hegelian academic called Martensen, author of a Hegelian theory of morals and later a bishop. So the odds were stacked pretty high against Schopenhauer's winning a prize.

Notes on text and translation

GERMAN EDITION

The translation in this volume is based on the German edition of Schopenhauer's works edited by Arthur Hübscher, *Sämtliche Werke* (Mannheim: F. A. Brockhaus, 1988), vol. 4. Page numbers of that edition are given in the margins of the translation. Hübscher's definitive edition follows the first complete edition compiled by Julius Frauenstädt in 1873 and published by Brockhaus in Leipzig, with revisions taking account of numerous later editorial interventions. A paperback edition of the Hübscher edition that preserves the same text, with different script and fewer editorial notes, is the so-called *Zürcher Ausgabe, Werke in zehn Bänden* (Zurich: Diogenes, 1977), in which the two essays on ethics appear in volume 6. (Those wishing to read the German text of the two essays that Schopenhauer himself last issued should consult Ludger Lütkehaus (ed.), *Arthur Schopenhauers Werke in fünf Bänden: Nach den Ausgaben letzter Hand* (Zurich: Haffmans, 1988), vol. 3.) Arguments for using Hübscher as the basis for translation are given by Richard Aquila in his 'Introduction' to Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Presentation*, vol. 1 (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2008), xli–xlii, the main reason being that Hübscher is commonly cited as the standard edition. When compiling my own editorial notes I have found it useful to consult those of Hübscher in the *Sämtliche Werke*, and also those in Paul Deussen (ed.), *Arthur Schopenhauers Sämtliche Werke* (Munich, 1912), whose notes are sometimes fuller. I am grateful to both Matthias Koßler of the Schopenhauer Gesellschaft, and to David Carus, for assistance in accessing the Deussen edition.

VOCABULARY

Many terms from the German text are given in editorial footnotes where this may be of help to the reader of a particular passage. Here I shall

comment on some of the more important decisions that have been made about translating frequent items in Schopenhauer's vocabulary. The term *Vorstellung*, for whatever comes before the mind in consciousness, has been translated as 'representation'. This follows the most common rendering of the term in Kant's writings (Kant uses the Latin *repraesentatio* when he wishes to elucidate his use of *Vorstellung*¹). A case could be made both for 'idea' and for 'presentation' as English translations of *Vorstellung*. The case for the former could be made, firstly, on the grounds of continuity with the use of 'idea' by Locke and other British empiricists; secondly, on the grounds that Schopenhauer himself uses 'idea' for *Vorstellung* in a sample of English translation composed in 1829, when he was proposing to translate Kant himself for an English audience;² and thirdly, 'idea' is simply a less clumsy word for the English reader.³ Nonetheless, the mainstream translation in Kantian contexts nowadays is 'representation', and this continuity is arguably more important to preserve. Finally, Schopenhauer himself uses the term *Idee* – which must be translated as 'idea' (or 'Idea') – in a different and highly specific sense, which he intends to be very close to a Platonic usage. We have chosen to avoid introducing the opposition of 'idea' versus 'Idea' and have opted instead for 'representation' versus 'Idea', which better reflects the opposition *Vorstellung* versus *Idee*. The case for 'presentation' might be that, while 'representation' unnecessarily imports the connotation of a definite item in the mind that is a copy, depiction or stand-in for something other than itself, 'presentation' resembles *Vorstellung* in suggesting simply the occurrence of something's coming before the mind or entering into its conscious experience.⁴ However, this is a rather subtle difference, and since 'presentation' has to be construed as a term of art just as much as 'representation', we have not resisted the pull of the latter, more conventional term. A word much used by Schopenhauer is *Erkenntniß* and its cognate verb *erkennen*. Though the former might ordinarily be rendered

¹ See *Critique of Pure Reason* A320/B376.

² See Schopenhauer's letter 'To the author of Damiron's Analysis' (21 December 1829) (*GB*, 122–3). In this letter, written in English, Schopenhauer advocates a 'transplantation of Kant's works into England' and promotes his own translating abilities, at one point commenting 'I hope . . . to render Kant more intelligible in English than he is in German: for I am naturally fond of clearness and precision, & Kant by the by was not' (120).

³ See David Berman, 'Introduction', in Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea: Abridged in One Volume* (London: Everyman, 1995), trans. Jill Berman, pp. xxxv–xxxvi.

⁴ See the case made by Richard E. Aquila, 'Translator's Introduction', in Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Presentation*, vol. 1, trans. Richard E. Aquila in collaboration with David Carus (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008), pp. xii–xvi. Aquila acknowledges 'representation' as 'commonplace' in translating both Kant and Schopenhauer.

as ‘knowledge’, the latter simply as ‘know’, ‘be acquainted with’ or ‘recognize’, we have most often translated them as ‘cognition’ and ‘cognize’ in contexts where they make a contribution to Schopenhauer’s epistemology and theory of mind. *Anschaung* is rendered as ‘intuition’, again in line with customary practice in translating Kant, *anschaulich* as ‘intuitive’ and so on. ‘Intuition’ is to be understood as a term of art denoting an awareness of objects in space and time through the senses.

The other central term in Schopenhauer’s philosophy is *Wille*, which can only be translated ‘will’. Some interpreters writing in English impose a distinction between ‘will’ and ‘Will’, intending by the latter *the* will, the will that Schopenhauer equates, or appears to equate, with the world as a whole in itself in *The World as Will and Representation*. But, aside from the fact that this metaphysical use impinges only marginally on the essays in ethics, there is in general no such orthographic differentiation in any of Schopenhauer’s texts themselves. (Arguably one would anyway need more variants than just two if one wanted to reflect the many nuanced roles that Schopenhauer gives to the term *Wille*: standing for the individual’s will as manifested in his or her actions, for the underlying, non-empirical but individual character that is *my will*, for the one will that is common to all creatures, and so on.) The verb *wollen* is standardly translated as ‘to will’ (except in non-technical contexts where ‘to want’ is more appropriate) and *das Wollen* as ‘willing’. *Wünschen* is ‘to wish’, *willkürlich* ‘voluntary’.

The words *Moral* and *Moralität* naturally permeate the second of the two essays in this volume. Schopenhauer clearly distinguishes the two, as when he talks of a ‘foundation of *Moral* and consequently also of *Moralität*’, and we have decided to translate them as ‘morals’ and ‘morality’ respectively. An immediate effect is to change the essay’s title to *On the Basis of Morals* (when in Payne’s version it was *On the Basis of Morality*). In the essay Schopenhauer tends to treat ‘morals’ as a theoretical study, a philosophical enterprise, while ‘morality’ describes people’s real-life actions and judgments. Thus in translating the Danish Academy’s prize essay question, he renders the Latin *moralitas* as *Moralität*, and *philosophia moralis* as *Moral*. A complication for the translator here is that *Moral* is a singular term, while ‘morals’ at least has the appearance of being plural, though it can sometimes work in the same way as ‘metaphysics’ or indeed ‘ethics’ and be followed by a singular verb. Hence the translation sometimes adopts plural and sometimes singular forms after ‘morals’. There are passages in which the difference between *Moral* and *Moralität* becomes of thematic importance, for example in Chapter III of the essay, where Schopenhauer speaks of an incentive that is the ultimate ground of *Moralität*, and says

that the *cognition* of that incentive is the foundation of *Moral*. The adjective *moralisch* is easily translated as ‘moral’ (and the adverb as ‘morally’), *Ethik* and *ethisch* likewise as ‘ethics’ and ‘ethical’. German also has the words *Sitten*, *sittlich*, *Sittlichkeit*, which we have tended to translate as ‘morals’, ‘moral’ or ‘ethical’, and ‘morality’, depending on context. But these are not terms that Schopenhauer favours. He dislikes the term *sittlich*, which he thinks should retain its primary sense of ‘customary’, and decries it as a poor substitute for *moralisch* – see his footnote to §14 of the essay.

The frequently occurring *Grund* is translated as ‘ground’. Sometimes this refers to a cause, at other times to a reason. The chief exception to this policy is to translate *Satz vom zureichenden Grunde* as ‘principle of sufficient reason’ simply because this is a more readily recognizable set phrase in English. Schopenhauer uses many cognates and compounds of *Grund*. *Grundlage* is translated as ‘basis’, as in the title of the second essay. Significant cognates here are *begründen* and *Begründung*, which are translated as ‘to ground’ and ‘grounding’. Thus the motto of the second essay becomes ‘preaching morals is easy, grounding morals hard’; and the all-important third chapter is entitled ‘Grounding of Ethics’. ‘Founding’ ethics or morals, in the sense of establishing it or getting it started, is not Schopenhauer’s business in the essay; he is interested in discovering what ethics may be founded upon (using also the term *Fundament*, ‘foundation’), but for this theoretical enterprise ‘grounding’ seems more appropriate.

The most important positive term in Schopenhauer’s own ethics is *Mitleid*. We translate it as ‘compassion’, not as ‘pity’. The latter is in many contexts a legitimate rendering of the German term, but is a poor candidate for the fundamental incentive on which actions of moral worth are based, because instances of pitying often involve a sense of distance from or even superiority over those whose suffering one recognizes, whereas *Mitleid* for Schopenhauer must involve the collapse of any such distance or even distinction between the sufferer and the one who acts out of *Mitleid*. The two virtues in which *Mitleid* manifests itself are *Gerechtigkeit*, ‘justice’, and *Menschenliebe*, which we have translated as ‘loving kindness’. It seems important that *Menschenliebe* is a species of *Liebe*, ‘love’. Literally it is ‘human-love’, love of (and by) human beings. ‘Philanthropy’, though an exact parallel in Greek-based vocabulary, seems to refer less to a prevailing attitude of mind or incentive in one’s character and more to the resultant good deeds. The opposite, *Lieblosigkeit*, literally ‘lovelessness’, is conventionally translated as ‘unkindness’, so that ‘loving kindness’ for the positive virtue seems appropriate. *Mensch* is translated as ‘human being’ and *mensschlich* as ‘human’ throughout.

Throughout the two essays Schopenhauer is talking of human actions. He varies his terminology for this without any detectable change in basic sense. Thus often he talks of *handeln* and *Handlung*, 'to act', 'action', then switches to *That*, *thun* or *Thun* (modern German *Tat*, *tun*, *Tun*), which we generally translate as 'deed', 'to do', 'doing' or 'doings' to preserve a similar variation in style. The *th* for *t* here (see also *Theil*, *Werth* etc.) is one instance of divergence in spelling from that of the present day. All German words in editorial notes are given in the original orthography that the Hübscher edition preserves (other examples being *aa* for *a*, *ey* for *ei*, *ä* for *e*, and *dt* for *t*, thus *Spaaß*, *Daseyn*, *Säligkeit*, *gescheidt*).

SYNTAX AND PUNCTUATION

Schopenhauer writes sentences of great variety in length. The general policy has been to reflect the character, pace and flow of the original as much as possible in the English version. Often he uses a direct and punchy statement, or a balanced classical sentence with two or three well-constructed clauses. But the greatest difficulty is presented by those many occasions where Schopenhauer launches into a disproportionately long sentence. On occasion, as in his rant against Hegel in the first preface to the essays, it can become hard to discern fully clear syntax. But generally Schopenhauer is a master of structure. Helped by well known features that distinguish German from English, notably the ability to frame long subordinate clauses with a verb postponed to the end, and three grammatical genders which allow nouns from earlier in the sentences to be picked up anaphorically without ambiguity, he can produce majestic sentences whose parts fit together perfectly and which make a powerful cumulative effect on the reader. While at times it has been necessary to split these passages into more than one English sentence, I have by and large retained their length, sometimes dividing them with a semicolon or dash.

Schopenhauer's punctuation, as transmitted by way of the Hübscher editions, is unlike standard present-day usage. One feature retained in the translation is his use of a simple dash (–) between sentences to separate out parts within a long paragraph. But I have tried to reflect rather than straightforwardly copy his practice of inserting commas, colons and semicolons inside sentences. There is no overall policy here other than that of matching the rhythm and pace of the original while producing something that makes good sense to the contemporary reader of English. Another feature is Schopenhauer's italicization of proper names – e.g. throughout the long chapter on Kant, that philosopher's name is italicized countless

times. I have tended to limit such italicization to occasions when Schopenhauer first mentions someone in a given context, or shifts back to discussing them.

SCHOPENHAUER'S USE OF OTHER LANGUAGES

A major decision has been made here which affects virtually every page of Schopenhauer's published writings. Schopenhauer is a master of many languages and delights in quoting extracts from other authors in Greek, Latin, French, Italian and Spanish. These extracts vary in length from the isolated phrase within a sentence to several unbroken pages of quotation which he thinks will substantiate his own view. Very often he will round off his argument with some apt words from Homer, Dante or Voltaire, always in the original language. He also has the scholar's habit of incorporating short tags in Latin or Greek into his own idiom (e.g. he will generally refer to something as a *petitio principii* rather than saying that it begs the question, or as a *πρῶτον ψεῦδος* rather than 'a false first step' or 'primary error'). Finally, when a substantial passage of Greek occurs Schopenhauer helpfully adds his own Latin translation for the reader's benefit.

The cumulative effect gives Schopenhauer's style historical depth and a pan-European literary flavour (with the occasional foray into transliterated Sanskrit). The question is how to deal with all of this in an English translation. Earlier versions have taken two different lines. One is simply to reproduce all the non-German passages in their original languages and leave it at that. This was done by R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp in their translation of *The World as Will and Idea* in 1883 and by Madame Karl Hillebrand in *On the Fourfold Root and On the Will in Nature* in 1891. While it may have been a reasonable assumption in those days, as it may have been for Schopenhauer himself, that anyone likely to read his book seriously would have sufficient access to the requisite languages, at the present time of writing such an assumption would appear misplaced. The second expedient is to leave all the original language passages where they stand in the text, but to add footnotes or parentheses giving English equivalents. This is the method, adopted in Payne's translations, that readers of Schopenhauer in English are now most familiar with. In the present translation, by contrast, we have adopted a third strategy: with a few exceptions, everything in the text is translated into English, and the original language version given in footnotes. This sacrifices some of the richness involved in reading Schopenhauer – but it arguably disadvantages only a reader who is a good linguist in several languages but not German. For all other readers of

English, the relevance of Schopenhauer's quotations to his argument, and the overall flow of his writing, are better revealed by following the sense of quotations directly, especially on those many pages where he makes his point by way of a chunk of Greek followed by a chunk of Latin that gives a second version of the same, or where he quotes two or more pages in French. Nor is anything really lost by our policy, since every word of the original language extracts is given in footnotes on the same page. Some exceptions to this practice occur where Schopenhauer specifically introduces a word in another language for discussion of its sense, or where he offers us a Spanish proverb or a Latin expression from the mediaeval scholastic tradition as especially apposite. In such cases the original language expression is retained in the text and the English equivalent offered in a footnote.

Where Schopenhauer quotes phrases and short sentences in Greek, he sometimes includes accents and sometimes omits them. I have followed his usage in all cases, despite the inconsistency.

Chronology

- 1788 Arthur Schopenhauer born on 22 February in the city of Danzig (now Gdansk), the son of the Hanseatic merchant Heinrich Floris Schopenhauer and Johanna Schopenhauer, née Trosiener
- 1793 Danzig is annexed by the Prussians. The Schopenhauer family moves to Hamburg
- 1797 His sister Adele is born. Schopenhauer begins a two-year stay in Le Havre with the family of one of his father's business partners
- 1799 Returns to Hamburg, and attends a private school for the next four years
- 1803–4 Agrees to enter career as a merchant and as a reward is taken by his parents on a tour of Europe (Holland, England, France, Switzerland, Austria). From June to September 1803 is a boarder in Thomas Lancaster's school in Wimbledon
- 1804 Is apprenticed to two Hanseatic merchants in Hamburg
- 1805 His father dies, probably by suicide
- 1806 Johanna Schopenhauer moves with Adele to Weimar, where she establishes herself as a popular novelist and literary hostess
- 1807 Schopenhauer abandons his commercial career for an academic one. Enters Gotha Gymnasium and then receives private tuition in Weimar
- 1809 Studies science and then philosophy (especially Plato and Kant) at the University of Göttingen
- 1811 Studies science and philosophy at the University of Berlin. Attends the lectures of Fichte and Schleiermacher
- 1813–14 Lives in Rudolstadt, writing his doctoral dissertation, *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, which is

- accepted by the University of Jena and published in 1813.
Conversations with Goethe on colour and vision
- 1814 Begins reading a translation of the *Upanishads*. Stays with his mother in Weimar, but breaks with her permanently after a final quarrel. Lives in Dresden until 1818
- 1814–18 Works on *The World as Will and Representation*
- 1816 Publishes *On Vision and Colours*
- 1818 March: completion of *The World as Will and Representation*, published by Brockhaus at the end of the year with '1819' on title page
- 1818–19 Travels in Italy (Florence, Rome, Naples, Venice) and returns to Dresden
- 1819 Is appointed as unsalaried lecturer (*Privatdozent*) at the University of Berlin
- 1820 Gives his only course of lectures, which is poorly attended
- 1822–3 Travels again to Italy (Milan, Florence, Venice). Returns from Italy to live in Munich. Is ill and depressed
- 1824 Lives in Bad Gastein, Mannheim and Dresden. Proposes to translate Hume's works on religion into German, but does not find a publisher
- 1826 Returns to Berlin
- 1829–30 Plans to translate Kant into English, without success
- 1831 Leaves Berlin because of the cholera epidemic. Moves to Frankfurt-am-Main
- 1831–2 Lives temporarily in Mannheim
- 1833 Settles in Frankfurt, where he remains for the rest of his life
- 1836 Publishes *On the Will in Nature*
- 1838 His mother dies
- 1839 Enters competition set by the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences and wins prize with his essay *On the Freedom of the Will*
- 1840 Submits *On the Basis of Morals* in a competition set by the Royal Danish Society of Sciences, and is not awarded a prize
- 1841 *On the Freedom of the Will* and *On the Basis of Morals* published under the title *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*
- 1844 Publishes second, revised edition of *The World as Will and Representation*, adding a second volume consisting of fifty elaboratory essays
- 1847 Publishes second, revised edition of *On the Fourfold Root*

- 1851 Publishes *Parerga and Paralipomena* in two volumes
- 1853 An article on his philosophy by J. Oxenford in *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review* marks the beginning of his belated recognition
- 1854 Publishes second edition of *On the Will in Nature*. Julius Frauenstädt publishes *Letters on Schopenhauer's Philosophy*
- 1857 Schopenhauer's philosophy taught at Bonn University
- 1858 Declines invitation to be a member of Berlin Royal Academy
- 1859 Publishes third edition of *The World as Will and Representation*
- 1860 Publishes second edition of *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*. Dies on 21 September in Frankfurt-am-Main

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The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics

Treated in two academic prize essays

by Dr. Arthur Schopenhauer,

member of the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences

- I. On the Freedom of the Human Will, *crowned with a prize* by the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences, at Trondheim, on 26 January 1839.
- II. On the Basis of Morals, *not* crowned with a prize by the Royal Danish Society of Sciences, at Copenhagen, 30 January 1840.

Μεγάλη ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ὑπερῖσχύει.

[Great is truth, and mighty above all things.

— 3 Ezra (I Esdras), 4, 41]

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Although they came about independently of one another in response to external occasions, these two essays mutually complement one another to form a system of the fundamental truths of ethics, in which, it is to be hoped, people will not fail to discern some progress in this science, which has been on holiday for half a century. Yet neither of them was allowed to refer to the other, nor to my previous writings, because each was written for a different academy and strict incognito is the familiar condition in such circumstances. So it also could not be avoided that some points were touched on in both, as nothing could be presupposed and everywhere a start had to be made from the very beginning.^a They are really separate expositions of two doctrines that can be found, in their fundamentals, in the Fourth Book of *The World as Will and Representation*, although there they were derived from my metaphysics, hence synthetically and *a priori*, and here, where as a matter of course no presuppositions were allowed, they appear instead grounded analytically and *a posteriori*: so what was first there is last here.^b Yet precisely in virtue of their starting from the standpoint that is common to all, and also in virtue of the separate exposition, both doctrines gained greatly here in graspability, persuasive power and the unfolding of their significance. Accordingly these two essays are to be regarded as supplementing the Fourth Book of my chief work, just as my text *On the Will in Nature* is a highly essential and important supplement to the Second Book. Incidentally, however heterogeneous the subject of the text just named may seem to be from that of the present one, there is nonetheless a real coherence between them, indeed the former

VI

^a *ab ovo* [literally 'from the egg']

^b [In *WWR* 2, ch. 12 (Hübscher *SW* 3, 133) Schopenhauer explains this use of 'synthetically' and 'analytically'. The analytic method, in this sense, proceeds from facts or particulars to theoretical propositions (*Lehrsätze*) or the universal. The synthetic method, in this sense, operates the other way around. 'So', he adds, 'it would be much more correct to designate them as *the inductive and the deductive method*'.]

text is to some extent the key to the present one, and the insight into this coherence completes for the first time the perfect understanding of both. If ever the time will come when people read me, they will find that my philosophy is like Thebes with a hundred gates: one can enter from all sides and reach the centre point on a straight path through all of them.

I should remark further that the first of these two essays has already found its place in the most recent volume of the records of the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences that appear in Trondheim. In consideration of Trondheim's great distance from Germany, this academy, with the greatest readiness and liberality, granted me the permission I requested of them – to have the right of arranging a printing of this prize essay for Germany – for which I hereby publicly declare my sincere thanks to them.

VII The second essay was *not* awarded a prize by the Royal Danish Society of Sciences, although there was none other present to compete with it. Since this Society has published its judgment upon my work, I am justified in examining it and making a reply to it. The reader will find it after the relevant essay and will see from it that the Royal Society found nothing whatsoever to praise in my work, but only to criticize,^a and that this criticism comprises three different objections, which I shall now go through individually.

The first and chief criticism, to which the others are attached only in an accessory way, is that I had misunderstood the question, thinking erroneously that the requirement was to establish the principle of ethics: instead the question had really and chiefly been concerning the *connection of metaphysics with ethics*. I had completely failed to expound this connection ('For, omitting what was principally required'^b), the judgment says at the *beginning*; yet three lines further on it has now forgotten this and says the opposite: namely, that I had expounded that very thing ('he expounded the connection between the ethical principle proposed by him and his metaphysics'^c), although I had provided this as an appendix and as something in which I accomplished more than was required.

This contradiction of the judgment with itself I wish to disregard altogether: I take it as a child of the embarrassment in which it was composed. On the other hand, I ask the just and learned reader now to read through the question set by the Danish Academy, with the introduction that prefaces it, as they stand printed at the front of the essay along with my translation of them, and then to decide *what the question is really asking after* – after

^a *tadeln*

^b *omisso enim eo, quod potissimum postulabatur*

^c *principii ethicae et metaphysicae suae nexum exponit*

the ultimate ground, the principle, the foundation, the true and proper source of ethics, or after the connection between ethics and metaphysics. – To make the matter easier for the reader, I want now to go through introduction and question, analysing them and bringing out their sense as clearly as possible. *The introduction* to the question tells us that there is supposedly a necessary idea of morality,^a or a primordial concept^b of the moral law, which appears doubly, that is, on the one hand in morals^c as a science and on the other hand *in real life*; in the latter it shows itself doubly again, that is, partly in judgment about our own actions, partly in that of the actions of others. Then to this primordial concept of morality there are supposedly linked other further concepts that rest upon it. On this introduction the Society grounds its question, namely: Where is *the source and basis of morals* to be sought? Is it perhaps in a primordial idea of morality that might actually and immediately reside in consciousness, or conscience? This idea must then be analysed, as must the concepts that issue from it; or is it that morals have another cognitive ground? – In Latin, when stripped of what is inessential and put in a totally clear formulation, the question runs like this: *Ubinam sunt quaerenda fons et fundamentum philosophiae moralis? Suntne quaerenda in explicatione ideae moralitatis, quae conscientia immediate contineatur? an in alio cognoscendi principio?*^d This last interrogative sentence reveals in the clearest possible way that the question definitely asks after the *cognitive ground of morals*.^e I will now add, into the bargain, a paraphrastic exegesis of the question. The introduction sets out from two wholly *empirical* remarks: there is factually a *science of morals*,^f it says; and it is likewise said to be a fact that moral concepts make themselves noticeable *in real life*, partly inasmuch as we ourselves are moral judges of our actions in our conscience, partly inasmuch as we judge the actions of others in a moral respect. Similarly a variety of moral concepts, e.g. duty,^g accountability^h and the like, are said to be in universal currency. Now in all this there is supposed to emerge an original idea of morality, a fundamental thought of a moral law, whose necessity is, however, to be

VIII

^a *Moralität*

^b *Urbegriff*

^c *Moral*

^d [Where are *the source and basis of moral philosophy* to be sought? Are they to be sought in the explication of an idea of morality that resides immediately in consciousness (or conscience)? or in another cognitive ground?]

^e *Erkenntnisgrund der Moral*

^f *Moralwissenschaft*

^g *Pflicht*

^h *Zurechnung*

IX a peculiar and not a merely *logical* necessity, i.e. one that could not be proved in accordance with the mere principle of contradiction from the actions to be judged, or from the maxims that lie at their basis. The rest of the chief moral concepts are supposed to issue from this primary moral concept, and to be dependent on it and hence inseparable from it as well. – What, then, does all this rest upon? – that would indeed be an important object of investigation. – That is why the Society is setting the following task: *the source, i.e. the origin of morals, the basis* of them, is to be sought (*quaerenda sunt*). *Where* should it be sought? i.e. where is it to be found? Could it be in an *idea of morality* that is innate in us and resides in our consciousness, or conscience? Then this idea, together with the concepts dependent on it, would merely need to be analysed (*explicandis*). Or is it rather to be sought somewhere else? i.e. do morals perhaps have as their source a cognitive ground of our duties quite other than the one just put forward by way of suggestion and example? – This is the content of the introduction and question, conveyed more extensively and clearly, but faithfully and precisely.

X Given this, who can retain the faintest doubt that the Royal Society is asking after the *source*, the origin, the basis, the ultimate cognitive ground of *morals*? – Now the source and basis of *morals* can in no way be other than that of *morality* itself: for that which theoretically and ideally is *morals*, is practically and really *morality*. The source of *the latter* must, however, necessarily be the ultimate ground of all moral good conduct: so for its part *morals* must also establish this very ground, in order to support itself on it and make appeal to it in everything that it prescribes to human beings – unless it wants either to pluck its prescriptions out of the air or, on the other hand, to ground them falsely. So *morals* has to prove this ultimate ground of all morality: for as a scientific edifice it has this as its foundation stone, just as morality as a practice has it as its origin. So this is undeniably the ‘foundation of moral philosophy’^a which the task is asking after: consequently it is as clear as day that the task really demands that *a principle of ethics* be sought and established, ‘*ut principium aliquod Ethicae conderetur*’, not in the sense of a mere supreme prescription or fundamental rule, but rather in the sense of a *real ground of all morality, and therefore a cognitive ground of morals*. – But the judgment *denies* as much when it says that because I thought this, my essay could not be awarded the prize. Yet anyone who reads the task will and must think this: for it stands there plainly, in black and white, with clear, unambiguous words and cannot

^a *fundamentum philosophiae moralis*

be denied away so long as the words of the Latin language retain their sense.

I have been long-winded over this: but the matter is important and remarkable. For from what has been said it is clear and certain that *what this academy denies it asked, it patently and incontrovertibly did ask*. – On the other hand, it claims to have asked something different. That is, the connection between metaphysics and morals is supposed to have been the chief subject of the prize question (this alone can be understood by ‘the theme itself’^a). Now the reader may wish to check whether *one word* about that can be found in the prize question or in the introduction: not a syllable and not a hint either. Someone who is asking about the connection between two sciences must after all name them both: but mention of metaphysics occurs neither in the question nor in the introduction. Incidentally, this whole key sentence of the judgment becomes clearer if we bring it out of its wrong order into the natural one, where it reads in precisely the same words: ‘The theme itself demanded the kind of investigation in which the connection between metaphysics and ethics would have been considered first and foremost; but the writer, omitting what was principally required, thought that the task was to set up some principle of ethics: so that he placed the part of his essay where he expounded the connection between the ethical principle proposed by him and his metaphysics in an appendix, in which he offered more than had been required.’^b Nor does the question about the connection between metaphysics and morals lie in any way within the point of view from which the *introduction* to the question starts out: for it begins with *empirical* remarks, refers to the acts of moral judgment that occur *in ordinary life* and the like, then asks what all of that ultimately rests upon? and finally proposes as an example of a possible resolution an innate idea of morality residing in consciousness. Thus in its example it provisionally and problematically assumes a mere *psychological fact* as the solution, and not a metaphysical theorem. But by doing this it clearly gives us to understand that it is demanding the grounding of morals by some *fact* or other, whether of consciousness or of the external world, and does not expect to see it derived from the dreams of some metaphysics or other: so the academy would have had every right to reject an essay that solved the question in that way. This should be considered well. But then there is the further point

XI

^a *ipsum thema*

^b *Ipsum thema ejusmodi disputationem flagitabat, in qua vel praecipuo loco metaphysicae et ethicae nexus consideraretur: sed scriptor, omisso eo, quod potissimum postulabatur, hoc expeti putavit, ut principium aliquod ethicae conderetur: itaque eam partem commentationis suae, in qua principii ethicae a se propositi et metaphysicae suae nexum exponit, appendicis loco habuit, in qua plus, quam postulatum esset praestaret.*

XII that the question about the *connection of metaphysics with morals* which was allegedly set, but which is nowhere to be found, would be a wholly unanswerable question, and consequently, if we grant any insight to the academy, an *impossible* one: *unanswerable*, because there is no *metaphysics pure and simple*,^a but only a number of different (and indeed extremely different) *metaphysics*,^b i.e. all sorts of attempts at metaphysics, considerable in number, in fact as many as there have been philosophers, each of whom sings a quite different song, and who fundamentally differ and dissent. The question could well be asked, accordingly, about the connection between the Aristotelian, Epicurean, Spinozist, Leibnizian, Lockean, or some other determinately stated metaphysics, and ethics; but never ever about the connection between *metaphysics pure and simple* and ethics, because this question would not have any determinate sense, since it calls for the relation between a thing that is given and one that is quite indeterminate and maybe even impossible. For so long as there is no metaphysics that is recognized as objectively true and undeniable, that is, a *metaphysics pure and simple*, we simply do not know if such a metaphysics is even so much as possible in principle, nor what it will or might be. Meanwhile, if someone wanted to urge that we do have a wholly universal, and hence admittedly indeterminate, concept of *metaphysics in general*,^c with regard to which the question could be posed concerning the connection in general between this metaphysics in the abstract^d and ethics – then that can be conceded, but the answer to the question taken in this sense would be so easy and simple that to put a prize on it would be ridiculous. For it could not claim anything more than that a true and complete metaphysics must provide ethics too with its firm support, its ultimate ground. Furthermore, this thought can be found expressed right in the first paragraph of my essay, where among the difficulties in the question before us I point out especially *this*: that by its very nature it excludes the grounding of ethics by means of any given metaphysics that one could take one's departure from and support oneself upon.

XIII In the above, then, I have proved incontrovertibly that the Royal Danish Society really did ask what it denies having asked; and on the contrary that it did *not* ask what it claims to have asked, and indeed could not even have asked it. This conduct by the Royal Danish Society would certainly not be right according to the moral principle that I put forward: but as they grant

^a *Metaphysik schlechthin*

^b *Metaphysiken* [plural: no plural of the English 'metaphysics' can be formed in the same way]

^c *Metaphysik überhaupt*

^d *in abstracto*

no validity to my moral principle, they will presumably have another one according to which it is right.

As to what the Danish Academy *really* asked, I answered that precisely. I showed first in a *negative* part that the principle of ethics does not lie where people have assumed it as securely proven for sixty years. Then, in the *positive* part, I revealed the genuine source of morally praiseworthy actions and really *proved* that its source is this and that it could be no other. Finally, I showed the relation in which this real ground of ethics stands – not to *my* metaphysics, as the judgment falsely alleges, nor to any determinate metaphysics – but rather to a universal grounding thought^a that is common to very many metaphysical systems, perhaps to most, and without doubt to the most ancient and in my opinion the truest of them. I did not give this metaphysical exposition as an appendix, as the judgment says, but as the final chapter of the essay: it is the keystone of the whole, a treatment of a higher kind in which the whole culminates. The fact that I said I was accomplishing more here than the task properly demanded arises from the fact that the task does not allude to a metaphysical explanation with a single word, and is still less, as the judgment asserts, wholly directed to such an explanation. In fact, whether this metaphysical argument is an addition, i.e. something in which I accomplish more than was required, is a side-issue, indeed it is irrelevant: enough that it is there. But the fact that the judgment wants to make *this* count against me bears witness to its embarrassment: it grasps at everything just so as to bring something forward against my work. Besides, in the nature of the case that metaphysical discussion had to constitute the conclusion of the essay. For had it gone before, the principle of ethics would have to have been derived from it *synthetically*, which would have been possible only if the academy had said which of the many extremely different metaphysics it preferred to see an ethical principle derived from: but then the truth of such a principle would have been wholly dependent on the metaphysics that had been presupposed, and so would have remained problematic. Consequently the nature of the question made an *analytic* grounding of the primary moral principle necessary, i.e. a grounding that is achieved on the basis of the reality of things, without presupposition of any metaphysics. Precisely because this way has been universally recognized in recent times as the only secure one, *Kant*, like the English moralists that preceded him, was at pains to ground the moral principle in the analytic way, independently of any metaphysical presupposition. To abandon that

XIV

^a *Grundgedanke*

would have been an obvious step backwards. Had the academy nonetheless demanded that, then it would at least have had to announce it in the most determinate way: but in its question there is not even a hint of it.

XV Still, since the Danish Academy has magnanimously kept silent over the fundamental defect of my work, I shall refrain from revealing it. I am only afraid that this will not help us, as I foresee that the perceptive nose of the essay's reader will detect the scent of the rotten part anyway. It could at any rate lead him to think erroneously that my Norwegian essay is affected at least as much by the same fundamental defect. The Royal Norwegian Society certainly did not allow this to prevent it from awarding my work a prize. But belonging to this academy is also an honour whose worth I am learning to see more clearly and gauge more fully every day. For as an academy it knows no other interest than that of truth, light and the furtherance of human insight and knowledge.^a An academy is not a tribunal of faith. But before it sets as prize questions such lofty, serious and troubling questions as the two before us here, every academy has first to decide for itself and establish whether it is also really prepared to accede publicly to the truth, however it may sound (for it cannot know that in advance). For afterwards, once a serious answer to a serious question has come in, it is no longer time to retract it. And when once the stone guest has been invited and arrives, even Don Juan is too much of a gentleman^b to cancel his invitation as he makes his entrance.^c This worry is without doubt the reason why the academies of Europe refrain as a rule from setting questions of this kind: the two before us here are really the first that I recall having been aware of, which was why, because of the rarity of the case,^d I undertook to answer them. For although it has been clear to me for ample time that I take philosophy too seriously to have succeeded in becoming a professor of it, yet I did not think that the same failing could also stand in my way with an academy.

The second criticism from the Royal Danish Society runs: 'the writer did not satisfy us with the form of his essay'.^e There is nothing to say in reply to that: it is the subjective judgment of the Royal Danish Society;* towards

* 'They say: this does not please me! and think they have disposed of it.' *Goethe* ['*Sprichwörtlich*']. Addition to the second edition.

^a *Erkenntnisse*

^b *ein Gentleman*

^c [A reference to the last act of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*]

^d *pour la rareté du fait*

^e *scriptor neque ipsa disserendi forma nobis satisfecit*

its examination I am publishing my work and appending the judgment to it, so that it does not get lost, but remains preserved XVI

As long as water flows and trees grow tall,
As long as the rising sun and the shining moon appear,
As long as rivers are full and the sea roars, –
I'll tell the traveller: Midas rests within.^{a,*}

I remark meanwhile that I give the essay here as I submitted it: i.e. I have neither deleted nor altered anything; however, the few brief and inessential additions that I have inserted subsequent to sending it I mark with a cross at the beginning and end of each, so as to forestall all claims and counter-claims.^{**}

The judgment adds to the above the following: ‘nor in fact did he show that this basis is sufficient’.^b Against this I appeal to the fact that I have genuinely and seriously *proved* my grounding of morals with a rigour that approaches that of mathematics. This is without precedent in *morals* and only became possible through the fact that, penetrating more deeply into the nature of the human will than has happened before, I have brought to light and exposed its three ultimate incentives,^c from which all its actions spring. XVII

But then what comes next in the judgment is: ‘rather he was forced to admit the opposite himself’.^d If that is supposed to mean that I myself

* The last line was omitted in the first edition, on the assumption that the reader would supply it. [Schopenhauer also added the Latin translation in the second edition, as he did for many Greek passages through the Two Essays volume.]

** This applies only to the first edition: in the present edition the crosses are omitted, because there is something off-putting about them, also because numerous new additions have now been made. So anyone who wishes to be acquainted with the essay in precisely the form in which it was submitted to the academy must get hold of the first edition.

a ἔστ' ἂν ὕδωρ τε ῥέη, καὶ δένδρεα μακρὰ τεθλήη,
ἥελιός τ' ἀνίων φαίνει, λαμπρὴ τε σελήνη,
καὶ ποταμοὶ πλήθουσιν, ἀνακλύζῃ δὲ θάλασσα —
ἀγγέλω παριοῦσι, Μίδας ὅτι τῇδε τέθαπται.

(*Dum fluit unda levis, sublimis nascitur arbor,
Dum sol exoriens et splendida luna relucet,
Dum fluvii labuntur, inundant littora fluctus,
Usque Midam viatori narro his esse sepulchrum.*)

[An epigram said to have been on Midas' tomb and written by Cleobulus: see 'the Life of Cleobulus' in Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, I; also Plato, *Phaedrus*, 264d.]

b *neque reapse hoc fundamentum sufficere evicit*

c *Triebfedern* [These incentives are egoism, malice and compassion. See below *On the Basis of Morals*, ch. III, esp. §§14–16.]

d *quin ipse contra esse confiteri coactus est*

declared my grounding of morals unsatisfactory, then the reader will see that no trace of that is to be found and that that kind of thing did not occur to me. But if in that phrase an allusion is perhaps being made to the fact that in one place I said that the reprehensibility of the unnatural sins of lust is not to be derived from the same principle as the virtues of justice^a and loving kindness^b – that would be making much out of very little and would be yet another proof of how they have grasped at everything to condemn my work. Then as a parting conclusion the Royal Danish Society deals me yet another harsh rebuke, which I do not see them as entitled to, even if its content were well grounded. So I will be of service to them on this. It reads: ‘several *distinguished philosophers* of recent times are mentioned in such an indecent fashion as to provoke just and grave offence’.^c These ‘distinguished philosophers’^d are in fact – *Fichte* and *Hegel*! For it was only about them that I expressed myself in strong and harsh terms, and hence in such a way that the phrase used by the Danish Academy could possibly find application; indeed, the criticism made there would, in itself, be just, if these people were ‘distinguished philosophers’. This alone is the point that is at issue here.

XVIII

As far as *Fichte* is concerned, only the judgment I already delivered 22 years ago in my main work can be found repeated and expounded in the essay. To the extent that it was voiced here, I motivated it by an extensive section specifically devoted to *Fichte*, from which it adequately emerges how far removed he was from being a ‘distinguished philosopher’:^e yet I placed him, as a ‘man of talent’, far above *Hegel*. Only upon the latter did I issue my unqualified damning judgment, without commentary, in the most decisive terms. For not only has he, in my conviction, performed no service to philosophy, but he has had a detrimental influence on philosophy, and thereby on German literature in general, really a downright stupefying, or we could even say a pestilential influence, which it is therefore the duty of everyone capable of thinking for himself and judging for himself to counteract in the most express terms at every opportunity. For if we remain silent, then who is to speak? So along with *Fichte* it is to *Hegel* that the rebuke dealt out to me in the conclusion of the judgment relates: indeed, since he came off the worst, he is principally meant when the Royal Danish

^a *Gerechtigkeit*

^b *Menschenliebe*

^c *plures recentioris aetatis summos philosophos tam indecenter commemorari, ut justam et gravem offensionem habeat.*

^d *summi philosophi*

^e *summus philosophus* [throughout the following discussion Schopenhauer uses the same Latin expression in different grammatical cases: thus *summi philosophi*, *summo philosopho*]

Society speaks of ‘distinguished philosophers of recent times’^a against whom I have indecently failed to show due respect. Thus from the very judge’s seat from whose height they condemn works such as mine with unqualified criticisms, they publicly declare *Hegel* a ‘distinguished philosopher’.

If a union of journal writers sworn to the glorification of the bad, if paid professors of Hegel^b and yearning private teachers who would like to become such professors, indefatigably and with unparalleled shamelessness proclaim this very ordinary mind but extraordinary charlatan to all four winds as the greatest philosopher the world has ever possessed – then that is worth no serious attention, still less so given that the blatant intent of this miserable business must gradually become evident even to those of little practice. But when it goes so far that a foreign academy wishes to adopt that philosophaster as a ‘distinguished philosopher’, and even permits itself to vilify the man who honestly and unflinchingly opposes the false fame, deceitfully obtained, bought and composed out of lies, with *that* degree of emphasis that is alone proportionate to the impudent promotion and obtrusion of what is false, bad and mind-corrupting – then the matter becomes serious: for a judgment with such authorization could mislead those who are not in the know into great and harmful error. So it must be *neutralized*: and since I do not have the authority of an academy, this must happen by way of grounds and evidence. These I now wish to present so clearly and comprehensibly that they will hopefully serve in future to commend to the Danish Academy the Horatian counsel:

XIX

Whoever you introduce, consider again and again, lest soon you blush for shame at the faults of others^c

If to this end I were to say that the so-called philosophy of *Hegel* was a colossal mystification that will provide even posterity with the inexhaustible theme of ridiculing our age, a pseudo-philosophy that cripples all mental powers, suffocates real thinking and substitutes by means of the most outrageous use of language the hollowest, the most devoid of sense, the most thoughtless and, as the outcome confirms, the most stupefying jumble of words, and that, with an absurd passing whim^d plucked out of the air

^a *recentioris aetatis summis philosophis*

^b *Hegelei*

^c

*Qualem commendes, etiam atque etiam adspice, ne mox
Incutiant aliena tibi peccata pudorem*

^d [Horace, *Epistles* I, 18, 76]

^d *Einfall*

as its core, it is devoid of both grounds and consequences, i.e. is neither proved by anything nor itself proves or explains anything, and what is more, lacking any originality, a mere parody of scholastic realism and of Spinozism at the same time, a monster which is also supposed to represent Christianity from the reverse side, in other words

a lion in front, a serpent behind, and in the middle a goat^a

XX – then I should be right. If I further said that this ‘distinguished philosopher’ of the Danish Academy scrawled nonsense as no mortal ever did before him, so that anyone who could read his most celebrated work, the so-called *Phenomenology of Spirit*,^{*} without having the impression that he was in a madhouse, would belong in it – then I would be no less right. Except that then I leave the Danish Academy the way out of saying that the high doctrines of that wisdom are unattainable by lower intelligences such as mine, and that what appears as nonsense to me is bottomless profundity. So then I must seek a firmer hold that cannot slip away, and drive the opponent into a corner where no back door is available. Therefore I shall now prove irrefutably that this ‘distinguished philosopher’ of the Danish Academy lacked even common human understanding, however common that is. That one can be a ‘distinguished philosopher’ even without this is a thesis that the academy will not put forward. But I shall firm up that deficiency with *three* different examples. And I shall take them from *the* book in which he ought most of all to have been mindful, collected himself and considered what he was writing, namely from his students’ compendium entitled *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*,^b the book that a Hegelian has called the Hegelians’ bible.

So in that book, in the section called ‘Physics’, §293 (second edition of 1827), he is dealing with specific gravity,^c which he calls *spezifische Schwere*,^d and contests the assumption that it rests upon difference in porosity, using

^{*} Properly called *System der Wissenschaft* [*System of Science*], Bamberg 1807. It must be read in this original edition, because in the *operibus omnibus* [*Complete Works*] it is supposed to have been somewhat licked smooth by the *assecla* [follower] who edited it. [Schopenhauer possessed this 1807 edition, which is in fact entitled *System of Science, First Part, The Phenomenology of Spirit*. See HN 5, 64.]

^a πρόσθε λέων, ὅππῃθεν δὲ δράκων, μέσση δὲ χίμαιρα
(*ora leonis erant, venter capra, caude draconis*)

[Homer, *Iliad* VI, 181. The description is of the mythical creature, the Chimaera.]

^b *Encyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*

^c *spezifisches Gewicht*

^d [*Schwere* is ‘heaviness’ or ‘weight’, although *spezifische Schwere* is also translated into English as ‘specific gravity’.]

the following argument: 'An example of the *existent* specification of gravity is furnished by the following phenomenon: when a bar of iron, evenly balanced on its fulcrum, is magnetized, it loses its equilibrium and shows itself to be heavier at one pole than at the other. Here the one part is so affected that without changing its volume it becomes heavier; the matter, without increase in its mass, has thus become specifically heavier.' Here, then, the Danish Academy's 'distinguished philosopher' makes the following inference: 'If a bar supported at its centre of gravity subsequently becomes heavier on one side, then it falls to that side; but an iron bar falls to one side once it has been magnetized: therefore it has become heavier in that place.' A worthy analogue to the inference: 'All geese have two legs, you have two legs, therefore you are a goose.' For, put into categorical form, the Hegelian syllogism reads: 'Everything that becomes heavier on one side falls to that side; this magnetized bar falls to one side: therefore it has become heavier in that place.' That is the syllogistic reasoning^a of this 'distinguished philosopher' and reformer of logic, whom people unfortunately forgot to teach that 'from mere affirmatives in the second figure nothing follows'.^b But seriously it is *innate* logic that makes inferences of that kind impossible for every healthy and straightforward understanding, and whose absence is designated by the term *lack of understanding*.^c How likely it is that a textbook containing arguments of this sort and speaking of bodies becoming heavier without increase in mass will render the straightforward understanding of young people crooked and bent – requires no discussion. – That was the first thing.

XXI

The second example of the lack of common human understanding in the Danish Academy's 'distinguished philosopher' is put on record by §269 of the same main work, which is also a teaching work, in the sentence: 'Gravitation directly contradicts the law of inertia; for, by virtue of the former, matter strives to get away *out of itself* to an Other.' – What? not grasping that it no more contravenes the law of inertia that one body is *attracted* by another than that it is *repelled* by it?! In the one case as in the other it is indeed the additional occurrence of an external cause that removes or alters the hitherto pertaining rest or movement, and in such a way that, in both attraction and repulsion, action and counter-action^d are equal to one another. – And to write down such a stupidity with such impudence! And this in a textbook for students, who as a result will be utterly in error,

XXII

^a *Syllogistik*

^b *e meris affirmativis in secunda figura nihil sequitur*

^c *das Wort Unverstand*

^d *Wirkung und Gegenwirkung*

perhaps forever, concerning the first fundamental concepts in the theory of nature,^a which should not remain foreign to any educated person. To be sure, the more undeserved the fame, the more brazenly he behaves. – To anyone who can think (which was not the case with our ‘distinguished philosopher’, who merely placed ‘the thought’ constantly in his mouth, as innkeepers place the prince who never enters their establishment on their sign) it is no more explicable that a body repels the other than that it attracts it, since unexplained natural forces, of the sort that every causal explanation has as its presupposition, lie at the basis of the one just as much as the other. So if someone wishes to say that a body that is attracted to another by gravitation strives to get away to it ‘out of itself’, they must also say that the body that is repelled flees ‘out of itself’ away from the repelling body, and see the law of inertia as being broken in the one case as in the other. The law of inertia flows immediately out of that of causality, and indeed is really only its converse: ‘Every alteration is brought about by a cause’, says the law of causality; ‘Where no cause intervenes, no alteration occurs’, says the law of inertia. So a state of affairs that contradicted the law of inertia would directly contradict that of causality too, i.e. would contradict what is certain *a priori*, and would show us an effect without cause: and to assume that is at the core of all *lack of understanding*. – That was the second thing.

XXIII

The Danish Academy’s ‘distinguished philosopher’ gives the third proof of the innate characteristic just mentioned in §298 of the same master work, where, polemicizing against the explanation of elasticity by means of pores, he says: ‘True, it is admitted in the abstract that matter is perishable, not absolute, yet in practice this admission is resisted, . . . ; so that in point of fact, matter is regarded as *absolutely self-subsistent, eternal*. This error springs from the general error of the understanding, that etc.’ – What fool has ever conceded that *matter is perishable*? And which one calls the opposite an error? – That matter *persists*, i.e. that it does not come into existence and perish like everything else, but is and remains through all time, indestructible and ungenerated, and that its quantum can therefore neither be increased nor diminished – this is a cognition *a priori*, as firm and certain as any mathematical one. Even imagining a coming into existence or perishing of matter is utterly impossible for us, because the form of our understanding does not admit it. So to deny this, to declare this to be an error, means renouncing all understanding outright. – That was the third thing. – Even the predicate *absolute* can rightfully and fittingly be

^a *Naturlehre*

applied to matter, as it conveys that its existence lies quite outside the region of causality, and does not enter into the endless chain of causes and effects, which only concerns, and binds together, its accidents,^a states, forms: the law of causality with its coming into existence and perishing extends only to these, to the *alterations* that take place *in* matter, and not to matter. In fact that predicate *absolute* has in matter the sole instance through which it gains reality and is admissible, otherwise it would be a predicate for which no subject could be found, hence a concept plucked from the air that could not be realized by anything, nothing more than a well inflated ball for fun-philosophers^b to play with. – By the way, the above pronouncement by this *Hegel* brings to light in a quite naive way what an old-womanish spinning-wheel-philosophy^c such a sublime, hyper-transcendent, aerobatic and bottomlessly profound philosopher is really, in his heart, childishy attached to, and what propositions he has never brought himself to call into question.

XXIV

So the Danish Academy's 'distinguished philosopher' teaches explicitly that bodies can become heavier without increase in their mass, and that this is particularly the case with a magnetized iron bar; likewise that gravitation contradicts the law of inertia; and finally that matter is perishable. These three examples will certainly suffice to show what sticks out a mile when an opening is left for once in that thick cloak of nonsensical gibberish that scorns all human reason, in which the 'distinguished philosopher' is wont to be enveloped as he strides in and impresses the intellectual rabble. They say 'tell the lion from its claw';^d but, decently or indecently,^e I must say 'tell the donkey from its ear'.^f – Anyway, someone who is just and non-partisan can now judge from the three specimens of Hegelian philosophy^g presented here who it was who really 'mentioned in an indecent fashion':^h he who without beating about the bush called such a teacher of absurdities

^a *Accidenzien*

^b *Spaafsphilosophen*

^c *Rockenphilosophie*. [Günter Zöller points out that Schopenhauer's reference is to *Rocken*, 'distaff' or 'spinning wheel', and offers the translation 'spinning-wheel philosophy'. (See 'Note on Text and Translation', in Arthur Schopenhauer, *Prize Essay on the Freedom of the Will* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. xxxviii.) An earlier translation had 'petticoat philosophy', based on the wrong assumption that this compound contained the word *Rock*, 'petticoat'. A 'distaff' philosophy carries the connotation of 'women's gossip' or 'old wives' tales'. See the classic dictionary by Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1893), Vol. 8, 1104.]

^d *ex ungue leonem*

^e *decenter* oder *indecenter*

^f *ex aure asinum*

^g *speciminibus philosophiae Hegelianae*

^h *indecenter commemoravit*

XXV a charlatan, or he who decreed from the academic chair^a that he is a ‘distinguished philosopher’?

I must add that out of the rich selection of absurdities of all kinds that the works of the ‘distinguished philosopher’ provide I have given preference to the ones presented here because, on the one hand, it is not a matter of difficult philosophical problems that may be unsolvable and therefore admit of a diversity of views; nor, on the other hand, is it here a matter of specialized truths of physics that presuppose more precise empirical knowledge,^b but rather of *a priori* insights, i.e. problems that everyone can solve by mere reflection. So a mistaken judgment in things of this kind is already a decisive and undeniable sign of quite abnormal lack of understanding, but the brazen exhibition of such nonsense doctrines in a textbook for students reveals to us what impertinence an ordinary mind is capable of if people proclaim him as a great mind. Doing this is, therefore, a means that no end can justify. With the three specimens from physics^c provided here one should compare the passage in §98 of the same master work, which begins ‘And since a force of attraction’ – and see the infinite loftiness with which this sinner looks down upon *Newton*’s universal attraction and *Kant*’s metaphysical principles of natural science. Anyone who has the patience should also read §§40 to 62, where the ‘distinguished philosopher’ gives a distorted portrayal of the Kantian philosophy and then, unable to gauge the magnitude of Kant’s achievements and placed too low by nature to be able to rejoice at the appearance – so unspeakably rare – of a truly great mind, instead looks down loftily on this great, great man from the height of self-assured, infinite superiority, as if on someone he passes over a hundred times and in whose schoolboyish efforts he indicates the mistakes and misconceptions with cold contempt, half ironically, half pityingly,^d for the education of his pupil. §254 is relevant here too. True, this affectation of superiority towards genuine achievements is a well known trick of all charlatans on foot and on horseback, yet when presented to imbeciles it does not readily fail in its effect. Thus, after nonsense-scrawling, the affectation of superiority was this charlatan’s chief dodge, so that at every opportunity he looks loftily, fastidiously, disdainfully and mockingly down from the height of his edifice of words, not only on the

^a *ex cathedra academica*

^b *Kenntnisse*

^c *speciminibus in physicis*

^d *mitleidig* [*Mitleid*, the central term in Schopenhauer’s account of morality, may be translated as ‘pity’ or ‘compassion’. In Schopenhauer’s moral theory the latter is used throughout, but for the attitude here the former is more appropriate.]

XXVI

philosophemes of others, but on every science and its method, everything that the human mind has attained through the course of centuries by acumen, effort and diligence – and in so doing he really provoked a high opinion of the wisdom locked up in his abracadabra among the German public, which thinks:

They have a proud and discontented look:
They seem to me to come from noble stock.^a

To judge from one's own resources is the privilege of a few: authority and example guides the rest. They see with someone else's eyes and hear with someone else's ears. So it is very easy to think as the whole world thinks now; but to think as the whole world will think for thirty years to come is not something everyone can do. So whoever is accustomed to trust in the word,^b and has accepted a writer's honour-worthiness on *credit*, but then later wishes to make it valid among others as well, can easily get into the position of one who has discounted a poor exchange and, when he expects to see it honoured, receives it back with bitter protests, and has to give himself the lesson of examining the firms of those issuing and endorsing it better next time. I should have to deny my sincere conviction if I did not assume that the cries of adulation for him artificially produced in Germany, together with the great number of his partisans, have had overbearing influence on the honourable title of a 'distinguished philosopher' that the Danish Academy used in relation to that waster of paper, time and heads. For that reason it seems purposeful to recall for the Royal Danish Society the fine passage with which a real distinguished philosopher, *Locke* (to whose credit it is to have been called the worst of all philosophers by *Fichte*), concludes the penultimate chapter of his celebrated master work, and which I will reproduce in German for the benefit of the German reader:

XXVII

Notwithstanding the great noise is made in the world about errors and opinions, I must do mankind that right as to say, There are not so many men in errors and wrong opinions as is commonly supposed. Not that I think they embrace the truth; but indeed, because concerning those doctrines they keep such a stir about, they have no thought, no opinion at all. For if any one should a little catechise the greatest part of the partizans of most of the sects in the world, he would not find, concerning those matters they are so zealous for, that they have any opinions of their own: much less would he have reason to think that they took them upon the examination of arguments and appearance of probability. They are resolved

^a [Goethe, *Faust*, I, 2177f. The two lines are reversed in the original.]

^b *Estime sur parole* [See Helvetius, *De l'esprit* (*On Spirit*), Discours II, ch. 4]

XXVIII

to stick to a party that education or interest has engaged them in; and there, like the common soldiers of an army, show their courage and warmth as their leaders direct, without ever examining, or so much as knowing, the cause they contend for. If a man's life shows that he has no serious regard for religion; for what reason should we think that he beats his head about the opinions of his church, and troubles himself to examine the grounds of this or that doctrine? It is enough for him to obey his leaders, to have his hand and his tongue ready for the support of the common cause, and thereby approve himself to those who can give him credit, preferment, or protection in that society. Thus men become professors of, and combatants for, those opinions they were never convinced of nor proselytes to; no, nor ever had so much as floating in their heads: and though one cannot say there are fewer improbable or erroneous opinions in the world than there are, yet this is certain; there are fewer that actually assent to them, and mistake them for truths, than is imagined.^a

XXIX

Locke is clearly right: anyone who gives good remuneration can find an army at any time, even though his cause be the worst in the world. Through healthy subsidies one can keep a bad philosopher on top for a while, just as one can a bad pretender to the throne. However, Locke here leaves unremarked a whole class of adherents of erroneous opinions and spreaders of false reputation, and indeed the class that makes up the proper train of followers, the bulk of the army^b of them: I mean the number of those who have no pretension, e.g. to become professors of Hegelry or to enjoy other forms of benefice, but who as pure gulls,^c feeling the total impotence of their power of judgment, chatter in imitation of those who know how to impress them, fall in and toddle along where they see a crowd gathering, and join in shouting where they hear noise. To complement the explanation Locke provides of a phenomenon that repeats itself in all ages, I want to present a passage from my favourite Spanish author, which will be welcome to the reader anyway since it is highly amusing and gives a taster from an excellent book that is as good as unknown in Germany. But this passage ought to serve especially as a mirror for many young and old dandies in Germany who, in the silent but profound consciousness of their mental incapacity, imitate the rogues in singing *the praise* of *Hegel* and affect to find wonderfully profound wisdom in the empty or even nonsensical utterances of this philosophical charlatan. Examples are odious;^d so I devote to such people, taken simply in the abstract,^e the lesson that there is nothing by

^a [Locke, *Essay on Human Understanding*, Book IV, ch. xx. sect. 18, original text, of which Schopenhauer gives a full and accurate translation]

^b *Gros de l'armée*

^c *Gimpel* (gulls)

^d *Exempla sunt odiosa*

^e *in abstracto*

which one lowers oneself more intellectually than by admiring and valuing what is bad. For Helvetius rightly says: 'The degree of intellect necessary to please us is a fairly exact measure of the degree of intellect that we possess.'^a Failure to recognize the good is much more readily excusable: for the most excellent in every category, because of its originality, comes to us so new and alien that to recognize it at first sight requires not just understanding but also great education in its category: so it finds recognition late, and all the later the higher its category, and the real illuminators of humanity share the fate of the fixed stars whose light takes many years to reach down to the human sphere of vision. By contrast, veneration of what is bad, false, mindless or indeed absurd, senseless even, admits of no excuse; rather one irrevocably proves by it that one is a simpleton and will therefore remain one till the end of one's days: for understanding will not be taught. – But on the other hand I am certain of the thanks of those honest and insightful people who may still exist, because, having received the provocation, I am for once treating Hegel, this plague of German literature, as it deserves. For they will be entirely of the opinion that *Voltaire* and *Goethe*, in remarkable agreement, express in this way: 'The favour lavished upon bad works is as opposed to the progress of the intellect as the violent attack on the good' (Letter to the Duchess of Maine).^b 'Real obscurantism is not in hindering the spread of what is true, clear and useful, but rather in bringing what is false into circulation' (*Unpublished Works*,^c vol. 9, p. 54). But what age can have experienced such a planned and forceful bringing into circulation of the thoroughly bad as these last twenty years in Germany? Which other age could have a similar apotheosis of nonsense and madness to show? For which other age do Schiller's lines

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I saw the holy wreath of fame
profaned upon the common brow,^d

seem so prophetically meant? Thus the Spanish rhapsody that I wish to present as the cheerful conclusion to this Preface is so wonderfully timely that the suspicion could arise that it was composed in 1840 and not in 1640: and so let me give the information that I translate it faithfully from the *Criticón*^e by Baltasar Gracián, Part III, Crisi 4, p. 285, in the first volume

^a *le degré d'esprit nécessaire pour nous plaire, est une mesure assez exacte du degré d'esprit que nous avons* [*De l'esprit*, Discours II, ch. 10, note]

^b *La faveur prodiguée aux mauvais ouvrages est aussi contraire aux progrès de l'esprit que le déchainement contre les bons* [used as Preface to Voltaire's *Oreste*]

^c *Nachlaß* [see Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen* (*Maxims and Reflections*), II, 84]

^d ['Die Ideale' (*Ideals*), stanza 9.]

^e [*El Criticón*, or 'The Faultfinder']

of the first Antwerp quarto edition of the *Works of Lorenzo Gracián*, from 1702.

XXXI

... But the leader and decipherer of our two travellers* found only the rope-makers, among them all, to be worthy of praise, because they go in the opposite direction to all the rest. –

When they had arrived, their attention was roused by what they heard. After looking everywhere, they caught sight of a clever charlatan standing on a common wooden stage, surrounded by a great mill-wheel of people, and they were the ones being ground and worked upon. He held them as his prisoners, chained by the ears, though not with the golden chain of the Theban,** but with an iron bridle. With a forceful gift of the gab indispensable on such occasions, this fellow offered to display wonderful things. ‘Now gentlemen,’ he said, ‘I will show you a winged wonder which is also a marvel of intellect. I am pleased to be dealing with persons of insight, real people; but I must remark that if any among you should not be gifted with a quite extraordinary intellect, he can leave right away, for the lofty and subtle things that will now occur cannot be intelligible to him. Therefore pay attention, gentlemen of insight and understanding! Now the eagle of Jupiter will step forth, who talks and argues as befits such a one, who jests like a Zoylus and taunts like an Aristarchus. No word will come from his mouth that does not encapsulate a mystery and contain an ingenious thought with a hundred

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allusions to a hundred things. Everything he utters will be sayings of the *most elevated profundity*.*** – ‘Without doubt this will be somebody rich or powerful,’ said *Critilo*, ‘for if he were poor, everything he said would be worthless. A silvery voice is good for singing, and a golden beak is even finer for speaking.’ – ‘Well, then!’ continued the charlatan, ‘let those gentlemen who are themselves not intellectual eagles take their leave, for now there is nothing they can get from here.’ – ‘What is this? No one going away? No one moving? – The fact was that no one professed to have the insight that he was devoid of insight; on the contrary, all considered themselves to be men of great insight, estimated their intelligence to be uncommon, and nurtured a high opinion of themselves. He now tugged at a coarse rein, and it appeared – the most stupid of animals; for even to mention its name is offensive. ‘Here you see’, cried the impostor, ‘an eagle, an eagle in all his brilliant qualities, in thought and in speech. Only let no one bring himself to say the contrary, for then he would discredit his intelligence.’ – ‘By heavens!’ cried one, ‘I can see his wings: Oh, how magnificent they are!’ – ‘And I’, said another, ‘can

* They are Critilo, the father, and Andrenio, the son. The decipherer is *Desengaño*, i.e. Disillusionment: he is the second son of Truth, whose first-born is Hate: *veritas parit odium* [truth gives birth to hate]

** He means Hercules, of whom he says in Part II, crisis 2, p. 133 (also in *Agudeza y arte* [*Agudeza y arte de ingenio: Subtlety and the art of genius*], discourse 19, and likewise in *Discreto* [*El Discreto: The Complete Gentleman*], p. 398) that chains went out from his tongue which held others prisoner by the ears. However (misled by an emblem in Alciatus), he confuses him with Mercury, who as the god of eloquence was depicted in this way.¹

*** An expression [*erhabenste Tiefe*] of Hegel’s in the Hegel Journal, *vulgo Jahrbücher der wissenschaftlichen Litteratur* [commonly called *Annals of Scientific Literature*]², 1827, no. 7. The original has simply *profundidades y sentencias* [profundities and aphorisms].

count the feathers on them: ah, how fine they are!’ – ‘Don’t you see it?’ said one to his neighbour. ‘Do I not?’ the latter cried, ‘Oh how clearly I do!’ But an honest and intelligent man said to his neighbour, ‘As true as I am an honourable man, I can’t see that there is an eagle there, nor that it has feathers, but only four feeble legs and quite a respectable tail (appendage).’^a – ‘Hush! Hush!’ retorted his friend, ‘don’t say that; you will be ruined! They will think you are a big *et cetera*. Listen to what we others say and do: then go with the flow.’ – ‘I swear by all the saints,’ said another honourable man, ‘that is not only no eagle, it is in fact its antipode; I say that it is a great big *et cetera*.’ – ‘Quiet! Be quiet!’ said his friend, nudging him with his elbow, ‘Do you want to be ridiculed by everybody? You should not say that it is anything but an eagle, even if you were to think the very opposite; that’s what all of us do.’ – ‘Do you not perceive the fine points he advances?’ cried the charlatan. ‘Whoever could not grasp and feel these must be devoid of all genius.’ A baccalaureus immediately jumped up and shouted: ‘How splendid! What great thoughts! The most eminent in the world! What aphorisms! Let me write them down! It would be an eternal shame if even an iota of them were lost (and after his departure, I shall edit my notebooks.)’* – At this moment the wondrous beast let out that ear-splitting song of his, enough to upset a whole council meeting, and accompanied it with such a stream of indecencies that all stood aghast, looking at one another. ‘Look! look! my timid** people,’ the crafty impostor quickly exclaimed. ‘Look and stand up on tip-toe! That’s what I call speaking! Is there another Apollo such as this? What do you think of the delicacy of his thoughts and the eloquence of his speech? Is there a greater intellect in the world?’ – The bystanders looked at one another, but no one dared to mutter nor to express just what he thought, which was indeed the truth, for fear of being taken for a simpleton. Rather, all broke out in a single voice of praise and applause. ‘Ah! that beak!’ shouted a ridiculous blabbering woman, ‘it carries me completely away: I could listen to it all day long.’ – ‘And may the devil take me,’ said a timid man quite softly, ‘if it is not an ass for all the world – though I shall take care not to say so.’ ‘Upon my honour,’ said another, ‘that was indeed no speech, but the braying of an ass; but woe to anyone who wished to say such a thing! That’s how it goes now in the world; a mole passes for a lynx, a frog for a canary, a hen for a lion, a cricket for a goldfinch, an ass for an eagle. What does the opposite matter to me? I keep my thoughts to myself, but talk like the others, and let us live! That’s all there is to it.’

Critilo was reduced to extremities at having to see such vulgarity on the one hand and such cunning on the other. ‘Can foolishness gain such mastery over people’s minds?’ he thought. But the braggardly rascal laughed at them all beneath

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* *Lectio spuria, uncis inclusa* [spurious passage, placed in brackets]

** One should write *Gescheut* [‘timid’] and not *Gescheidt* [‘clever’ – a correct rendering of the original’s *ententidos*]: the etymology of the word is based on the thought that Chamfort expresses so neatly: *l’écriture a dit que le commencement de la sagesse était la crainte de Dieu; moi, je crois que c’est la crainte des hommes* [Scripture has said that the beginning of wisdom was the fear of God; but I believe it was the fear of men, *Maximes et Pensées (Maxims and Thoughts)*, ch. II].

^a *Zagel* (*Schwanz*) [Both terms mean ‘tail’ but are also slang for ‘penis’].

the shadow of his large nose, and said to himself in triumph, as in an aside from comedy: 'Haven't I bested them all for you? Could a procuress do more?' And once more he gave them a hundred absurdities to digest, whereupon he again cried: 'Let no one say it is not so, for otherwise he will brand himself as a simpleton.' This made the vile applause now rise even higher, and *Andrenio* joined in with them. – But *Critilo*, who could stand it no longer, was ready to burst. He turned to his dumbfounded decipherer with these words: 'How long is this person to abuse our patience, and how long are you prepared to keep silent? The insolence and vulgarity exceed all bounds!' – To this, the other replied: 'Just have patience until time makes a statement; it will recover the truth, as it always does. Just wait till the monster turns its tail region towards us, and you will then hear those who now admire it, deplore it.' And this is precisely how it turned out, as the impostor again dragged in his diphthong of eagle and ass (the former as much a lie as the latter was correct). At the same moment, first one and then another began to come out with what they thought. 'On my honour,' said one, 'that was no genius, but an ass.' – 'What fools we have been!' exclaimed another. And so they mutually gave one another courage, until the talk was: 'Has anyone ever seen such a deception? He has truly said not a single word that had anything to it, and we have applauded him. In short, it was an ass, and we deserve to be pack-saddled.'

But even now the charlatan stepped forward, promising another and greater marvel. 'Now,' he said, 'I will really present to you nothing less than a world-famous giant, next to whom *Enceladus* and *Typhoeus* would not allow themselves to be seen. At the same time, however, I must mention that whoever calls out to him "giant!" thereby earns his fortune; for he will help him to great honours, will heap riches upon him – thousands, indeed, tens of thousands, of piastres in income – as well as dignity, office and station. But woe to the one who does not recognize a giant in him. Not only will he gain no favours, but he will get curses and punishment. Look out, world! Now he comes, now he shows himself, Oh, how high he towers!' – A curtain raised and there appeared a tiny man who would have been no more visible had he been hitched up to a hoist, no larger than the distance between elbow and hand, a nothing, a pygmy in every respect, in essence and in deed. 'Now, what are you doing? Why do you not shout? Why do you not applaud? Raise your voices, you orators! Sing, you poets! Write, you geniuses! Let your chorus be: the famous, the extraordinary, the great man!' – All stood aghast and asked one another with their eyes: 'What kind of giant is this? What heroic trait do you see in him?' – But soon the crowd of flatterers began to shout loud and ever louder, 'Yes! Yes! The giant, the giant! The first man in the world! What a mighty prince was he! What a valiant marshal! What an eminent minister of so-and-so!' At once, doubloons showered on them. Then the authors wrote! No longer stories, but panegyrics. The poets, even *Pedro Mateo**³ himself, chewed their nails, fearing for their livelihood. And no one there dared say the opposite. Rather, they all shouted in competition: 'The giant! The great, the greatest giant of all!' For everyone hoped for a position, a benefice. Secretly and at heart, of course, they said: 'How boldly I lie! He has not even grown up, but is still a dwarf. But

* He sang the praises of Henry VI: see *Criticón*, Part III, crisis 12, p. 376.

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what am I to do? Go up there and say what you think; then see what that will get you. On the other hand, doing as *I* do, I have clothing and food and drink, and can shine and shall become a great man. So he may be what he likes, but in spite of the whole world let him be a giant.’ – *Andrenio* began to go with the flow, and he too shouted: ‘The giant, the giant, the prodigious giant!’ And instantly gifts and doubloons were showered on him; so he exclaimed: ‘That, that is the wisdom of life!’ But *Critilo* stood there, about to fly into a passion. ‘I shall burst if I do not speak,’ he said. ‘Don’t speak,’ said the decipherer: ‘and do not rush to your ruin. Wait until the giant turns his back on us, and you will see how things go.’ And so it came about: for as soon as the fellow had finished playing his part as a giant, and now retreated into the cloakroom of mortuary shrouds, everyone began to shout: ‘What simpletons we have been! That was no giant, but a pygmy in whom there was nothing and who amounted to nothing.’ And they asked one another how it had been possible. But *Critilo* said: ‘What a difference it makes whether we speak of someone during his lifetime or after his death! How absence alters speech! How great is the distance between being over our heads and beneath our feet!’

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Yet the deceptions of this modern *Sinon* were not yet at an end. He now rushed to the other side and fetched eminent men, true giants, whom he made out to be dwarfs, people who were good for nothing, who were nothing, and even less than nothing: to which all said yes, so that these eminent men had to pass for dwarfs, without people of judgment and critical faculty daring to grumble. In fact, he even produced the Phoenix and said it was a beetle. All pronounced that yes, it was, and so it had to pass for a beetle. –

So far Gracián, and so much for the ‘distinguished philosopher’ for whom the Danish Academy in all honesty thinks it has the right to demand respect: whereby they put me in the position of serving them with a counter-lesson to the lesson meted out to me.

I would like further to mention that the public would have received these two prize essays half a year earlier, had I not firmly relied on the Royal Danish Society to make the decision known – as is right and as all academies do – in the same journal where they publish their prize questions abroad (here the *Halle Literary Journal*^a). But they are not doing that, and instead one has to obtain the decision from Copenhagen, which is all the more difficult as the date of it is not even given in the prize question. So I set out on this path six months too late.^{*,4}

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Frankfurt am Main, September 1840.

* However, they published the judgment subsequently, i.e. after the appearance of the present *Ethics* and this reprimand. Specifically, they had it published in the *Intelligenzblatt* [newsletter] of the *Halle Literary Journal*, November 1840, N. 59 and also in the *Jena’sche Litteraturzeitung* [*Jena Literary Journal*] of the same month – so they published in November what had been decided in January.⁴

^a *Halle’sche Litteraturzeitung*

Preface to the second edition

Both prize essays have received quite considerable additions, which are mostly not long but are inserted in many passages and will contribute to the thorough comprehension of the whole. One cannot guess from the number of pages, because of the larger format of the present edition. They would, incidentally, have been even more numerous, had not uncertainty as to whether I would live to see this second edition necessitated my setting down the thoughts that belong here successively where I could in the meantime, that is, partly in the second volume of my main work, chapter 47, and partly in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, volume 2, chapter 8. —

XL So the essay on the foundation of morals that was condemned by the Danish Academy and rewarded merely with a public rebuke appears here in a second edition after twenty years. I gave the necessary discussion of the academy's judgment in the first Preface, and above all showed there that in the judgment the academy denies having asked what it did ask, and on the contrary claims to have asked what it did not ask at all; and indeed I have expounded this (pp. ix–xiv^a) so clearly, so extensively and thoroughly that no pettifogger in the world can obliterate it. What hangs on it here I really do not need to say. Concerning the conduct of the academy overall I do now have the following to add after a period of twenty years for the coolest deliberation.

If the purpose of academies were to suppress truth as much as possible, to suffocate mind and talent to the best of their ability and bravely uphold the reputation of windbags and charlatans, then on this occasion our Danish Academy would have fulfilled it exceptionally. But because I cannot oblige them with the respect demanded of me for windbags and charlatans who are proclaimed as great thinkers by corrupt eulogists and deluded gulls, I will instead give the gentlemen of the Danish Academy a useful piece of advice. Whenever the gentlemen release a prize question into the world,

^a [pp. 6–11 above]

they must beforehand acquire a portion of the power of judgment, at least as much as one needs for the household, simply so as to be able to distinguish oats from chaff should the need arise. For otherwise, if things are in too bad a way in Peter, Part Two,^{a,*} you can meet with a rebuff. In other words, a Midas-fate follows a Midas-judgment, and does not fail.^b Nothing can protect you from it; grave faces and noble airs cannot help. It comes to light anyway. However thick the wigs you put on – there is no lack of indiscreet barbers, of indiscreet reeds, and nowadays people do not even bother to dig themselves a hole in the ground. – On top of all this there is the childlike trust involved in issuing me with a public rebuke and having it printed in the German literary journals, over my not being such a simpleton as to let myself be impressed by the song of praise struck up by humble minister-creatures and long continued by the brainless literary rabble, so as to join the Danish Academy in taking mere tricksters, who never sought the truth but only their own cause, for ‘distinguished philosophers’.^c Did it not in any way occur to these academicians to ask themselves first whether they had even a shadow of justification for issuing me with public rebukes concerning my views? Are they so utterly forsaken by all gods that this did not enter their minds? – Now come the consequences; nemesis is here; the reeds are already rustling! Despite the united resistance of all the philosophy professors over many years, I have finally made a breakthrough, and the eyes of the learned public are opening ever more widely concerning our academicians’ ‘distinguished philosophers’: even though they are being sustained for a little while longer, with failing powers, by poor philosophy professors who compromised themselves with them long ago and who need them besides as material for lectures, they have nonetheless sunk very greatly in public estimation, and Hegel in particular is heading with strong strides towards the contempt that awaits him in posterity. Opinion about him has already, over twenty years, come three-quarters of the way towards the outcome that concludes the allegory from Gracián presented in the first Preface, and in a few years will have reached it altogether, thus coinciding

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* *Dialectices Petri Rami pars secunda, quae est ‘de iudicio’* [*Dialectics* by Peter Ramus, Part Two, which is ‘On Judgment’]

^a *secunda Petri*

^b [The fate of Midas in the Greek legend is to grow the ears of an ass. He judged a music contest between Apollo and Pan in favour of the latter, and was punished in this way by Apollo. He concealed the ears from everyone except his barber, who whispered what he knew into a hole in the ground. But when the hole was refilled reeds grew over it and whispered the truth about the ears when the wind blew them.]

^c *summi philosophi*

completely with the judgment that gave the Danish Academy ‘such just and grave offence’^a twenty years ago. So, as a return gift for their rebuke, I would like to honour the Danish Academy with a poem of Goethe for their album:

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You can always praise what’s bad:
For that you get reward at once!
You’ll swim up high in your filthy pool
And *be the bunglers’ patron saint*.

Berate the good? Give that a try!
It’s fine if you are bold enough:
But if the people sniff you out,
They’ll tread you in muck, as you deserve.^b

That our German philosophy professors have not found the contents of the present ethical prize essays worth considering, let alone taking to heart, is something already duly acknowledged by me in the essay on the Principle of Sufficient Reason, pp. 47–9 in the second edition, and besides it goes without saying. After all, why should high minds of this class pay attention to what folk^c like me say! Folk on whom, in their writings, they at best cast a glance of disdain and criticism down from on high as they pass. No, what I put forward troubles them not: they stick with their free will^d and their moral law,^e even if the grounds against them should be as rich in number as blackberries. For those things belong to the obligatory articles of faith, and they know what they are there for: they are there ‘to the greater glory of God’^f and deserve one and all to become members of the Royal Danish Academy.

Frankfurt am Main, August 1860.

^a *tam justam et gravem offensionem*

^b [*Zahme Xenien* (‘mild epigrams’), V, 1315f.]

^c *Leuten*

^d *Willensfreiheit*

^e *Sittengesetz*

^f *in majorem Dei gloriam*

Prize essay on the freedom of the will
awarded a prize
by the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences,
at Trondheim, on 26 January 1839

Motto:
La liberté est un mystère

[Freedom is a mystery: after Helvétius,
De l'esprit, Discours 1, ch. 4]

The question set by the Royal Society reads as follows:
Num liberum hominum arbitrium e sui ipsius conscientia
demonstrari potest?

3

In translation: **‘Can the freedom of the human will be proved
from self-consciousness?’**

I DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

In such a weighty, serious and difficult question, which in essence coincides with a major problem for the entire philosophy of the middle and modern ages, great precision is certainly in place, and so therefore is an analysis of the main concepts that occur in the question.

1) *What does freedom mean?*

This concept, considered precisely, is a *negative* one. With it we think merely of the absence of everything that hinders or restrains, which in turn, as manifesting force,^a must be something positive. The concept has three very different sub-species, corresponding to the possible nature of the hindrance: physical, intellectual and moral freedom.

- a) *Physical freedom* is the absence of *material* hindrances of any kind. Thus we say:^b free sky, free view, free air, free space, a free place, free heat
 4 (which is not chemically bound), free electricity, free course of a stream, when it is no longer restrained by mountains or sluices, and so on. Even free lodging, free board, free press, a postage-free letter, indicate the absence of the burdensome conditions which tend to attach to such things as hindrances to enjoyment. But most frequently in our thinking the concept of freedom is the predicate of animal beings, whose peculiarity is that their movements issue from *their will*, are voluntary,^c and consequently are called free in case no material hindrance makes this impossible. Because these hindrances can be of very different kinds, while what is hindered by them is always *the will*, for the sake of simplicity we prefer to take the concept from the positive side, and use it to think of everything that moves itself solely through its own will, or acts solely out of its own will: a reversal of the concept that essentially alters nothing. Consequently in this *physical* sense of the concept of freedom, animals and human beings are called free when neither bonds nor prison nor paralysis, in other words no *physical, material* hindrance whatever restrains their actions, but these proceed rather according to their *will*.

This *physical sense* of the concept of freedom, especially as a predicate of animal beings, is the original, immediate sense and hence the most frequent of all, and for that very reason it is subject to no doubt or controversy in

^a *Kraft*

^b [Schopenhauer lists expressions in German which use the word 'frei'. They are not all equally idiomatic with the English 'free'.]

^c *willkürlich*

this sense, but can always vouchsafe its reality through experience. For as soon as an animal being acts solely from its own *will*, it is, in this sense, *free*: and in this case no attention is paid to the question what may possibly have influence upon its will itself. For it is only to the *being-able*,^d i.e. to the absence of physical hindrances to the being's activities, that the concept of freedom relates in this, its original, immediate and hence popular sense. Thus we say: the bird is free in the sky, the deer in the wood; man is free by nature; only the free man is happy. We also call a people free, and understand by that that it is governed solely by laws, but has made these laws itself: for in that case it follows only its own will throughout. Political freedom is accordingly to be included in physical freedom.

As soon as we leave behind *physical* freedom, however, and consider its other two kinds, we have to deal no longer with the popular sense of the concept, but with a *philosophical* sense of it, which, as is well known, opens the way to many difficulties. It falls into two entirely different kinds: intellectual and moral freedom. 5

b) Intellectual freedom, 'the voluntary and involuntary with respect to thought'^a in Aristotle, is considered here merely for the sake of complete conceptual classification: so I give myself leave to postpone discussion of it until the very end of this treatise, where the concepts to be used in it will already have been explained in what goes before, and it can then be treated briefly.¹ Still, being immediately related to physical freedom, it had to have its place next to it in the classification.

c) Thus I move on straight away to the third kind, to *moral freedom*, which is really the *liberum arbitrium* of which the Royal Society's question speaks.

This concept is linked to that of physical freedom in one respect, which also makes intelligible its own, necessarily much later origin. Physical freedom is, as we have said, connected only with material hindrances, upon whose absence it exists at once. But now people observed in many cases that, without being restrained by material hindrances, a human being was held back by mere motives, as for instance threats, promises, dangers and the like, from acting as would otherwise certainly have been in accordance with his will. Hence the question arose whether such a human being had still been *free* or whether a strong counter-motive could really restrain an action that accorded with his genuine will just as much as a physical hindrance could, and make it impossible. The answer to this could contain

^d *das Können*.

^a τὸ ἐκούσιον καὶ ἀκούσιον κατὰ διάνοιαν [cf. *Eudemian Ethics*, ii, 7, 1223a]

no difficulty for the healthy understanding; namely, that a motive could never have the same effect as a physical hindrance; while the latter can easily exceed any human bodily strength unconditionally, a motive, by contrast, can never be irresistible in itself, can never have unconditional force, but

6 could always possibly be outweighed by a *stronger counter-motive*, if only some such were present and the given human being in the individual case could be determined by it. For we frequently see that even the absolutely strongest of all motives, the preservation of life, is nevertheless outweighed by other motives, e.g. in the cases of suicide and sacrifice of one's life for others, for opinions and interests of all different sorts; and conversely that every degree of the most refined torment on the torture-table has at some time been overcome by the mere thought that otherwise life would be lost. But even if it became clear from this that motives are accompanied by no purely objective and absolute compulsion, it was still nevertheless possible for a subjective and relative compulsion to obtain, namely for the person of the one concerned; which in the end came to the same thing. So there remained the question: Is the will itself free? – Here then the concept of freedom, which previously had only been thought of in connection with *being-able*, had been put into connection with *willing*,^a and the problem had arisen whether willing itself was *free*. But, on closer consideration, the purely empirical and hence popular concept of freedom² proves incapable of entering into this bond with *willing*. For in terms of this concept 'free' means 'in accordance with one's own will': so if one asks whether the will itself is free, one is asking whether the will is in accordance with itself, which is admittedly self-evident, but by which equally nothing is said. According to the empirical concept of freedom we can say 'I am free, if I can *do what I will*', and there in this 'what I will' freedom is already decided. But now, given that we are enquiring about the freedom of *willing* itself, this question would accordingly frame itself thus: 'Can you also *will* what you will?' – which comes out as if willing depended on yet another willing lying behind it. And supposing this question was answered in the affirmative, the second would immediately arise: 'Can you also will what you will to will?' and in this way the matter would be pushed up higher into infinity, in that we would always be thinking of *one* instance of willing as dependent upon an earlier or deeper-lying one, and by this route striving in vain finally to reach one that we had to regard as dependent on nothing

7 at all, and had to assume. But if we wanted to assume such a thing, then we could adopt the first for that purpose just as well as any arbitrary last one,

^a Wollen.

whereby the question would be returned to the quite simple ‘Can you will?’ But whether simply answering this question in the affirmative decides the freedom of willing is what we wanted to know, and remains unresolved. Therefore the original, empirical concept of freedom that is drawn from doing refuses to enter into a direct bond with the concept of the will. Because of this, so that the concept of freedom could be applied to the will nonetheless, it had to be modified by being made more abstract. This was done by thinking under the concept of *freedom* simply the absence of all *necessity* in general. The concept meanwhile retains the *negative* character that I attributed to it right at the start. Accordingly the first task would be to elucidate the concept of *necessity*, the *positive* concept that gives that *negative* concept its meaning.

So we ask: what does *necessary* mean? The usual explanation, ‘necessary is that whose opposite is impossible, or what cannot be otherwise’, is a merely verbal explanation, a paraphrase of the concept, that does not increase our insight. But as the real explanation I put forward the following: *necessary is that which follows from a given sufficient ground*: a proposition which, like every correct definition, admits of being reversed. According to whether this sufficient ground is a logical one,³ or a mathematical one, or a physical one, called a cause, the *necessity* will be logical (as that of the conclusion when the premisses are given), mathematical (e.g. the equality of the sides of the triangle if the angles are equal), or physical, real (as the onset of the effect as soon as the cause is present): but it always attaches, with equal strictness, to the consequence once the ground is given. Only insofar as we grasp something as consequence of a given ground do we cognize it as necessary, and conversely, as soon as we cognize something as consequence of a sufficient ground, we have the insight that it is necessary: for all grounds are compelling. This real explanation is so adequate and exhaustive that necessity and consequence from a given sufficient ground are nothing less than interchangeable concepts, i.e. the one can be substituted for the other everywhere.* – Absence of necessity would accordingly be identical with absence of a determinate sufficient ground. However, the opposite of the *necessary* is thought of as the *contingent*^a – which does not conflict with our account. Because everything contingent is so only *relatively*. For in the real world, where alone the contingent is to be encountered, every circumstance is *necessary*, in relation to its cause: while in relation to everything else it

* The elucidation of the concept of necessity can be found in my Essay on the Principle of Sufficient Reason, second edition, §49.

^a *das Zufällige* [which could also be translated as ‘the accidental’]

may coincide with in space and time it is *contingent*. So the free, as absence of necessity is its distinguishing mark, would have to be that which simply depended on no cause whatsoever, and would have to be defined as the *absolutely contingent*: a highly problematic concept, whose thinkability I do not vouch for, but which in a strange way coincides with that of *freedom*. At any rate the *free* remains that which is necessary in no relation, which means that which is dependent on no ground. Now this concept, applied to the will of human beings, would proclaim that an individual will in its manifestations (acts of will) was not determined by causes, or by sufficient grounds of any sort; since otherwise, because consequence from a given ground (of whatever kind it may be) is invariably *necessary*, its acts would not be free but necessary. This is the basis of *Kant's* definition, according to which freedom is the capacity to initiate a series of alterations 'by oneself'. For this 'by oneself', brought back to its true meaning, amounts to 'without preceding cause': but that is identical to 'without necessity'. So that, although that definition of freedom gives the concept of freedom the outward impression of being a positive one, on closer consideration its negative character nevertheless comes to the fore again. – A free will, then, would be of a kind that was not determined by grounds, and – since everything that determines another must be a ground, and in the case of real things a real ground, i.e. a cause – it would be of a kind that was determined by nothing at all; its particular manifestations (acts of will)

9 would thus have to come forth simply and originally out of itself, without being brought about necessarily by preceding conditions, that is, without being determined by anything at all in accordance with a rule. With this concept clear thinking fails us, because the principle of sufficient reason, in all its meanings, is the essential form of our entire cognitive faculty, but here it is supposed to be given up. Meanwhile this concept is not lacking a technical term:^a it is called *liberum arbitrium indifferenciae*.^b This is incidentally the single clearly determinate, stable and clear cut concept of what is called free will; hence one cannot depart from it without falling into wavering, misty explanations, behind which hides a hesitant half-heartedness, such as when there is talk of grounds that do not produce their consequences necessarily. Every consequence of a ground is necessary, and every necessity is consequence of a ground. From the assumption of such a *liberum arbitrium indifferenciae* the next consequence, which characterizes this concept itself and can be ascertained as its distinguishing mark, is that

^a *terminus technicus*

^b [free choice of indifference]

for a human individual who is endowed with it, under given conditions that are quite individual and thoroughly specified, two diametrically opposed actions are equally possible.

2) *What does self-consciousness mean?*

Answer: consciousness of one's *own self*, in contrast to consciousness of *other things*, the latter being the cognitive faculty. This faculty indeed contains, even before those other things occur in it, certain forms of the mode and manner of this occurring, which accordingly are conditions of the possibility of their objective existence, i.e. their existence as objects for us: those forms, familiarly, are time, space and causality. Now although these forms of cognition lie in us ourselves, this is nevertheless solely for the purpose of our being able to be conscious of *other things* as such and in thoroughgoing relation to them: hence, though they lie in us, we must regard those forms not as belonging to *self-consciousness*, but rather as making possible *consciousness of other things*, i.e. objective cognition.

Furthermore I will certainly not allow the double meaning of the word *conscientia* used in the question set to mislead me into linking with self-consciousness those familiar moral emotions of human beings that go under the name of conscience, and even that of practical reason, together with their categorical imperatives propounded by *Kant*; partly because such things arise only in consequence of experience and reflection, that is, in consequence of the consciousness of other things, and partly because the dividing line between that which belongs originally and intrinsically to human nature and that which is added by moral and religious education has not yet been sharply and incontrovertibly drawn. Besides, it surely cannot be the intention of the Royal Society to drag conscience into self-consciousness, and as a result to see a transposition of the question into the field of morals and a repetition of *Kant's* moral proof, or rather postulate,⁴ of freedom from moral laws known *a priori*, by means of the inference 'you can, because you ought'.

It is clear from what has been said that by far the greatest part of our consciousness as a whole is not *self-consciousness*, but *consciousness of other things*, or our cognitive faculty. This faculty, with all its powers, is directed outwards and is the arena^a (and even, from the standpoint of a more profound investigation, the condition) of the real external world, towards which it first relates itself in intuitive apprehension, and, later, as

^a *Schauplatz*

if ruminating, works up what it has gained in this way into concepts, in the endless combination of which, accomplished with the help of words, *thinking* consists. – Therefore only what we have left after removing this, by far the largest part of our overall consciousness, would be *self-consciousness*. From here we can already see in advance that its realm cannot be great: and so, if the data we seek towards the proof of free will should really be in this realm, we are permitted to hope that they will not elude us. An *inner sense** has also been posited as the organ of self-consciousness, but this is to be taken more in a figurative than in a genuine sense: for self-consciousness is immediate.⁵ However that may be, our next question is: what does self-consciousness contain? Or: how does a human being become immediately conscious of his own self? Answer: entirely as something that *wills*. Everyone will soon become aware, on observing his own self-consciousness, that its object is at all times his own willing. True, we have to comprehend under this heading not only decisive acts of will that immediately become deeds, and formal decisions along with the actions that proceed from them; rather, anyone who has any capacity at all to grasp hold of what is essential, even through diverse modifications of degree and kind, will not resist counting all desiring, striving, wishing, longing, yearning, hoping, loving, enjoying, rejoicing and the like, no less than not-willing or resisting, and detesting, fleeing, fearing, being angry, hating, grieving, suffering pain, in short all affects and passions, among the manifestations of willing as well; for these affects and passions are simply movements, more or less weak or strong, now violent and stormy, now gentle and calm, of one's own will that is either restrained or released, satisfied or unsatisfied, and they all relate in multiple variations to the attainment or non-attainment of what is willed, and to enduring or overcoming what is detested; thus they are decided affections of the same will that is in operation in decisions and actions.** But in this very place belong even what are called feelings of pleasure and

* It is found already in Cicero as *tactus interior*: *Acad. quaest.* [*Academica*], IV, 7. More clearly in Augustine, *De lib. arb.* [*On the Free Choice of the Will*], II, 3ff. Then in Descartes, *Princ. Phil.* [*Principles of Philosophy*], IV, 190; and fully elaborated in Locke.⁶

** It is noteworthy that the Church Father Augustine already recognized this completely, while so many more recent thinkers, with their alleged 'feeling-faculty', do not realize it. For in *de civit. Dei* [*The City of God*], Book XIV, ch. 6, he speaks of the *affectiones animi* [affections of the mind], which in the previous book he has brought under four categories, *cupiditas, timor, laetitia, tristitia* [desire, fear, joy, sadness] and says: *voluntas est quippe in omnibus, imo omnes nihil aliud, quam voluntates sunt: nam quid est cupiditas et laetitia, nisi voluntas in eorum consensionem, quae volumus? et quid est metus atque tristitia, nisi voluntas in dissensionem ab his, quae nolumus?* [The will is in all of them; indeed, they are nothing other than willings: for what is desire and joy but a willing in agreement with those things that we want? And what is fear and sadness but a willing in disagreement with those things that we do not want?]⁷

displeasure, which, though present in a great multiplicity of degrees and kinds, can in all cases be reduced to desiring or detesting affections, and thus to the will itself becoming conscious of itself as satisfied or unsatisfied, restrained or released: indeed, this extends as far as pleasant and painful bodily sensations, and all those countless sensations that lie between these two extremes, for the essence of all these affections consists in their entering self-consciousness as something in accordance with the will or as something contrary to it. Even one's own body, precisely considered, is something one is immediately conscious of only as the outwardly effective organ of the will and seat of receptivity for pleasant or painful sensations, which themselves reduce, as we have just said, to totally immediate affections of the will that are either in accordance with it or in opposition to it. Anyway, whether or not we include these mere feelings of pleasure and displeasure, we find in any case that all those movements of the will, that alternation of willing and not-willing which, in its constant ebb and flow, makes up the sole object of self-consciousness, or, if you like, of inner sense, stands in thoroughgoing and universally acknowledged relation to what is perceived and cognized in the external world. By contrast, as we have said, the latter no longer lies in the realm of *self-consciousness*, for we have reached the boundary of self-consciousness where it adjoins the region of *consciousness of other things* as soon as we touch the external world. But the objects perceived in this world are the material and the occasion for all those movements and acts of the will. This should not be interpreted as a begging of the question:^a for that our willing always has external objects^b as its content,^c which it is directed towards, which it revolves around, and which at least influence it as motives, no one can deny; because otherwise he would be left in possession of a will wholly closed off from the external world and imprisoned in the murky interior of self-consciousness. But the necessity with which the things situated in the external world determine acts of the will still remains problematic for us at this stage.

Thus we find self-consciousness very heavily, and in fact exclusively, occupied with the *will*. Now whether in this its sole material it encounters data from which might emerge the *freedom* of that very will, in the only clear and determinate sense of the word expounded above, is the question upon which we set our sights and which we now want to steer straight for, our progress towards it having so far been on a zigzag course, though nonetheless considerable.

^a *petitio principii*

^b *Objekte*

^c *Gegenstand*

14

II THE WILL BEFORE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

If a human being *wills*, then he wills something: his act of will is in every case directed towards an object^a and can be conceived only in relation to one. So what does it mean to will something? It means: the act of will, which itself is at first only an object of self-consciousness, arises on the occasion of something that belongs to consciousness *of other things*, thus something that is an object^b for the cognitive faculty, an object that, in this relation, is called a *motive* and at the same time is the material of the act of will, in the sense that the act of will is directed towards it, i.e. aims at some alteration in it, or reacts to it. The whole being of the act of will consists in this *reaction*. Already from this it is clear that without the object the act of will could not occur; for it would lack both occasion and material. But the question arises whether, given that this object is present for the cognitive faculty, the act of will *must* occur too, or whether it could be absent and either no act of will or quite another, even totally opposed to it, could arise; that is, whether that reaction could be absent, or turn out different, or indeed opposed, under wholly identical circumstances. This means, in short: is the act of will called forth with necessity by the motive? or, as the motive enters consciousness, does the will rather possess total freedom to will or not to will? Here, then, the concept of freedom is taken in the abstract

15 sense that was elucidated above and proved to be the only one applicable here, as mere negation of necessity, and with this our problem is stated. But it is in immediate *self-consciousness* that we are to seek the data towards the problem's solution, and to that end we shall examine its formulation precisely – and not cut the knot by a summary decision, as *Descartes* did when, without further ado, he put forward the assertion: 'Nonetheless, we have such close awareness of the freedom and indifference which is in us, that there is nothing we can grasp more evidently or more perfectly' (*Principles of Philosophy*, I, §41).^c *Leibniz* already rebuked this assertion as inadmissible (*Theodicy* I, §50, and III, §292), though on this point he himself was but a frail reed in the wind, and after the most contradictory utterances finally arrived at the result that the will was indeed inclined by the motive, but not necessitated. For he says: 'All actions are determined and never indifferent because there always exists a reason which inclines us, although it does not necessarily compel us, to act rather in this way and

^a *Gegenstand*

^b *Objekt*

^c *Libertatis autem et indifferentiae, quae in nobis est, nos ita conscios esse, ut nihil sit, quod evidentius et perfectius comprehendamus.*

not in any other' (Leibniz, 'On Freedom', *Works*, ed. Erdmann, p. 669).^{d,8} This gives me the occasion to remark that this kind of middle way between the alternatives stated above is not tenable, and that one cannot say, in line with a certain favoured half-heartedness, that motives determine the will only to a certain extent, that it suffers an influence, but only up to a certain degree, and then can extricate itself from it. For as soon as we have attributed causality to a given force – that is, acknowledged that it is effective – then, if there is a resistance of any kind, it only requires an increase of the force in proportion to the resistance, and it will complete its effect. Someone who cannot be bribed with 10 ducats, but wavers, can be with 100, etc.

So we turn with our problem to immediate *self-consciousness*, in the sense we established above. What illumination does this self-consciousness give us about that abstract question, namely about the applicability or non-applicability of the concept of *necessity* to the occurrence of the act of will once the motive is given, i.e. is represented by the intellect? or about the possibility, or impossibility, of its absence in such a case? We would find ourselves very disappointed if we were expecting fundamental and profound illuminations about causality in general and motivation in particular, or about whatever kind of necessity both bring with them, from this self-consciousness, since in the way it dwells in all human beings it is too simple and restricted a thing to be capable of having its say about such matters. These concepts are rather created out of the pure understanding, which is directed outwards, and they cannot be spoken about except before the forum of reflecting reason.⁹ By contrast, that natural, simple, even simple-minded self-consciousness cannot so much as understand the question, let alone answer it. Its pronouncement concerning acts of will, to which everyone may listen in his own interior, if stripped of everything alien and inessential and reduced to its naked content, will allow itself to be expressed something like this: 'I can will, and when I am going to will an action, the movable members of my body will accomplish it straight away, as soon as I simply will, quite inevitably'. That means in short: '*I can do what I will*'. The pronouncement of immediate self-consciousness goes no further, however one may vary it, and in whatever form one may pose the question. Its pronouncement always relates to *being able to do in accordance with the will*: but this is the empirical, original and popular concept of freedom that was established right at the beginning, for which *free* means

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^d *Omnes actiones sunt determinatae, et nunquam indifferentes, quia semper datur ratio inclinans quidem, non tamen necessitans, ut sic potius, quam aliter fiat.* [See *Letter to Coste*, *On Human Freedom* (19 Dec. 1707)]

17 'in accordance with the will'. This freedom self-consciousness will proclaim unconditionally. But this is not what we are asking after. Self-consciousness proclaims the freedom of *doing*, under the presupposition of *willing*; but it is the freedom of *willing* that is being asked after.¹⁰ That is, we are enquiring into the relation of willing itself to the motive: but concerning this the pronouncement 'I can do what I will' contains nothing. The dependence of our doing, i.e. our bodily actions, on our will, which self-consciousness does indeed proclaim, is something quite other than the independence of our acts of will from external circumstances, which would constitute free will, but which self-consciousness can say nothing about because it lies outside its sphere, pertaining to the causal relation of the external world (given to us as consciousness of other things) to our decisions, while self-consciousness can make no judgment on the connection between what lies completely outside its realm and what is within it. For no cognitive power can discover a relation, one of whose terms can in no way be given to it. Yet the *objects* of willing, which are what determine the act of will, obviously lie outside the limits of *self-consciousness*, in consciousness of *other things*; only the act of will itself lies *within* the same, and the question is about the causal relation between the former and the latter. The only matter for self-consciousness is the act of will, together with its absolute mastery over members of the body, which is really meant by 'what I will'. And it is only the use of this mastery, i.e. *the deed*, that first stamps it, even for self-consciousness, as an act of will. For as long as it is in process of becoming it is called a *wish*, when ready, a *decision*; but its being this is proven to self-consciousness only by the *deed*: for until that it is alterable. And here we stand right at the mainspring of that admittedly undeniable illusion that leads someone who is unprejudiced (i.e. philosophically unrefined) to think that in a given case opposed acts of will were possible for him, priding himself the while on his self-consciousness, which, he thinks, proclaims this. That is, he confuses wishing with willing.^a He can *wish* opposed things,* but *will* only one of them: and even to self-consciousness only *the deed* first reveals which one it is. But self-consciousness can contain nothing concerning the lawlike necessity through which, of two opposed wishes, the one and not the other becomes act of will and deed, precisely because it experiences the result so completely *a posteriori* and does not know it *a priori*. Opposed wishes together with their motives rise and fall

* On this see *Parerga [and Paralipomena]*, vol. 2, §327, in the first edition.

^a *Wünschen mit Wollen*

before it, in alternation and repeatedly: it pronounces about each of them that it will become a deed if it becomes an act of will. For this last purely *subjective* possibility is indeed present with all of them and is that very ‘I can do what I will’. But this *subjective* possibility is entirely hypothetical: it says merely ‘If I will this, then I can *do* it’. Yet the determination requisite for willing does not lie in this; because self-consciousness contains merely the willing, but not the grounds that determine us to will, which lie in consciousness of other things, i.e. in the cognitive faculty. On the other hand, it is the *objective* possibility that tips the balance: but this lies outside self-consciousness in the world of objects, among which the motive and the human being as object belongs, and so is alien to self-consciousness and belongs to consciousness of other things. The *subjective* possibility is of the same kind as the possibility of giving off sparks that lies in the stone, yet is conditioned by the steel, to which *objective* possibility attaches. I will come back to this from the other side in the following chapter, where we shall consider the will no longer, as here, from within, but from without, and hence shall investigate the *objective* possibility of the act of will: then, once it has been illuminated from two different sides, the matter will receive its full clarity and also be elucidated by examples.

Thus the feeling present in self-consciousness, ‘I can do what I will’, accompanies us constantly, but testifies merely that the resolves or decisive acts of our will, despite springing from the dark depths of our insides, will make the transition into the world of intuition^a because our body, like everything else, belongs to that world. This consciousness forms the bridge between inner world and outer world, which otherwise would remain divided by a bottomless chasm, since in the latter there would be mere intuitions independent of us in every sense, as objects, and in the former nothing but ineffectual and merely felt acts of will. – If one asked a completely unprejudiced person, he would express the immediate consciousness that is so frequently taken to be one of a putative free will something like this: ‘I can do what I will: if I will to go left, then I go left: if I will to go right, then I go right. That depends entirely on my will alone: so I am free.’ This pronouncement is incidentally completely true and correct, only in its case the will is already present in what is presupposed, for it assumes that the will has already decided: therefore on these grounds nothing can be made out about its own intrinsic state of freedom.^{b, 11} For in no way does it pronounce about the dependence or independence of the *occurrence* of the

^a *anschauliche Welt*

^b *sein eigenes Freiseyn*

act of will itself, but only about the *consequences* of this act once it occurs, or, to speak more precisely, of its inevitable appearance as action of the body. It is solely the consciousness at the basis of this pronouncement that allows someone unprejudiced, i.e. the philosophically unrefined person, who all the same can still be greatly learned in other fields, to take free will for such a totally immediate certainty that he declares it an indubitable truth and cannot really believe that philosophers would doubt it in earnest, but in his heart holds that all the talk about this is mere fencing practice in scholastic dialectic and at bottom a game. However, it is precisely because the certainty given by this consciousness, which is indeed important, is constantly so much to hand for him, and also because a human, as first and essentially a practical rather than a theoretical being, is very much more conscious of the active side of his acts of will, i.e. their effectiveness, than of the *passive* side, i.e. their dependence, that it is hard to make the real sense of our problem comprehensible for the philosophically unrefined person and bring him to the point where he grasps that now the question is not about the *consequences* but about the *grounds* of any given willing of his; that his doing indeed depends entirely upon his willing, but that now we are demanding to know what *his willing itself* depends on, whether on nothing or on something; that he can *do* the one thing, if he wills, and just as well *do* the other, if he wills, but that now he is to reflect whether he is also capable of *willing* the one as much as the other. In this regard, suppose we put the question to the person something like this: ‘Can you really, with opposing wishes that arise within you, comply^a with one of them quite as much as the other? E.g. in a choice between two objects of possession that mutually exclude one another can you prefer the one just as well as the other?’ Here he will say: ‘Perhaps I can find the choice hard: nevertheless it will still depend quite solely on me whether I *will* to choose the one or the other, and on no other power:^b I have total freedom over which I *will* to select, and in this I shall always carry out solely my *will*.’ – If we now say: ‘But your willing itself, what does that depend on?’ then the person will answer out of self-consciousness: ‘On nothing at all but me! I can will what I will: what I will, that I will.’ – And he says this last thing without intending the tautology, or relying even in the innermost of his consciousness on the principle of identity, through which alone it is true. Rather, pressed to the extreme here, he speaks of a willing of his willing, which is as if he spoke of an I of his I.¹² We have driven him

^a *Folge leisten*

^b *Gewalt*

back to the core of his self-consciousness, where he encounters his I and his will as indistinguishable, but nothing is left over to judge them both. Whether there was any possibility that the choice, his *willing itself* of the one and not the other, could have turned out differently than it finally turns out, when his person and the objects of the choice are here assumed as given; or whether from the data just presented the same is established as necessarily as is the fact that in a triangle the greatest side lies opposite the greatest angle – that is a question so remote from natural *self-consciousness* that it cannot even be brought to its comprehension, let alone carrying the answer complete within itself or even as a mere undeveloped germ that it needs only to produce naively out of itself. – In line with what has been stated, the unprejudiced but philosophically unrefined person will always seek to take refuge from the perplexity that the question must engender once really understood, behind that immediate certainty ‘What I will I can do, and I will what I will’, as said above. He will try this over and over again, countless times; so that it will be hard to induce him to stay before the proper question, which he will always seek to slip away from. And this is not to be held against him: for the question is an extremely disquieting one. It reaches with an enquiring hand into the innermost essence of the human being: it wants to know whether he too, like everything else in the world, is a being decided once and for all by his very constitution, one that like every other thing in nature has its determined, fixed properties from which his reactions to any external occasion that arises issue necessarily, bearing their (in this respect) unalterable character as a result, and so, when it comes to anything about them that might be modifiable, is totally surrendered to determination by occasions from outside – or whether he alone constitutes an exception to the whole of nature. Still, if we finally succeed in inducing him to stay before this very disquieting question and in making it clear to him that the enquiry is into the origin of his acts of will themselves, into what may be the rule, or the utter rulelessness, of their occurrence, then we shall discover that immediate self-consciousness contains no information about this. For right here the unprejudiced person departs from self-consciousness and displays his helplessness in reflection and all sorts of attempts at explanation, whose grounds he tries to take now from experience he has had of himself and others, now from general laws of the understanding. Yet in so doing, through the uncertainty and instability of his explanations, he reveals sufficiently that his immediate self-consciousness delivers no information concerning the question he has understood rightly, just as before it promptly had information ready concerning the question he had understood erroneously. The ultimate ground

for this is that the person's will is his proper self,^a the true core of his being: that is why the same constitutes the ground of his consciousness, as something simply given and present at hand, which he cannot get out beyond. For he himself is as he wills, and wills as he is. Hence to ask him whether he could also will otherwise than he wills means asking him whether he could also be another than himself: and that he does not know. For the same reason, if the philosopher, who is distinguished from that person merely through practice, also wants to arrive at clarity in this difficult predicament, he must look to his understanding which supplies cognitions *a priori*, to reason which thinks them over, and to experience which displays to him his own doing and that of others for the interpretation and confirmation of the understanding's cognition.^b These are the ultimate and only competent authority,^c whose verdict, while not so easy, immediate and simple as that of self-consciousness, will nonetheless be to the point and exhaustive. It was the head that raised the question, and it must answer it too.

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Incidentally, we ought not to be surprised that self-consciousness has no answer to show to that abstruse, speculative, difficult and disquieting question. For it is a very restricted part of our overall consciousness, which, dark on its inside, is wholly outward-directed with all of its objective cognitive powers. Indeed, all its completely certain cognitions, i.e. those known with certainty *a priori*,^a have to do with the external world alone, and so it can decide with certainty in accordance with certain laws that are rooted in itself what out there is possible, what impossible, what necessary, and on this path it brings pure mathematics, pure logic, and even fundamental natural science into existence. First the application of the forms that it knows *a priori* to the data given to the senses in sensation provides it with the real world of intuition and thereby with experience: beyond that, the application to that external world of logic and the capacity for thought that grounds it will provide concepts, the world of thoughts, and through that in turn the sciences, their achievements, etc. *Out there*, then, great brightness and clarity lie before its gaze. But *inside* it is dim, like a well blacked telescope: no *a priori* principle illuminates the night of its own interior; rather these lighthouses shine solely towards the outside. Before the so-called inner sense, as explained above, nothing is present but one's own will, to whose movements all so-called inner feelings can really be reduced as well. But everything that provides this inner perception

^a *sein eigentliches Selbst*

^b *Verstandeserkenntnis*

^c *Instanz*

^a *seine vollkommen sicheren, d.h. a priori gewissen Erkenntnisse*

reduces, as shown above, to willing and not-willing, along with the fated certainty 'what I *will*, that I can *do*', which really states: 'I see each act of my will present itself immediately (in a way totally incomprehensible to me) as an action of my body' – and which, properly construed, is an empirical proposition for the cognizing subject. Beyond this there is nothing to find here. So, on the question raised, the tribunal to which it is presented is incompetent: indeed the question cannot be brought before it in its true sense, because it does not understand the question.

I shall now resume in a shorter and easier version the answer we obtained to the question that was posed of self-consciousness. Anyone's *self-consciousness* proclaims very clearly that he can do what he wills. But since even entirely opposed actions can be thought as *willed* by him, it follows to be sure that he can also do opposed things, *if he wills*. The unrefined understanding, however, confuses this with his being able also to *will* opposed things in a given case, and calls this *freedom of the will*. Except that his being able to *will* opposed things in a given case is by no means contained in the above pronouncement, but rather merely that, out of two opposed actions, if he *wills this one*, he can do it, and if he *wills that one*, he can do it too: but whether he *could will* the one as much as the other in the given case remains unresolved by this and is the object of a deeper investigation than can be decided through mere self-consciousness. The shortest, albeit scholastic formula for this result would be: the pronouncement of self-consciousness concerns the will merely *a parte post*;^a the question about freedom, by contrast, *a parte ante*.^b – Therefore that undeniable pronouncement of self-consciousness 'I can do what I will' contains and decides absolutely nothing about the freedom of the will – which, in the single individual case and with a given individual character, would amount to any act of will's not itself being determined necessarily by the external circumstances in which this human being here finds himself, but being able to turn out this way and also another way. But about this self-consciousness remains totally dumb: for the matter lies entirely outside its field, resting as it does on the causal relation between the external world and the human being. If one asks a person of healthy understanding but without philosophical education what the free will he asserts so readily upon the pronouncement of his self-consciousness consists in, he will answer: 'In my being able to do what I will, as soon as I am not physically hindered'. Thus it is always the relation of his *doing* to his *willing* that he

23

^a [with regard to what follows]

^b [with regard to what precedes]

24 speaks of. But this, as was shown in the first chapter, is still merely *physical* freedom. If one asks him further whether, in a given case, he can *will* one thing as much as its opposite, then, though in his first eagerness he will say yes, as soon as he starts to grasp the sense of the question, he will also begin to feel disquiet, will finally fall into uncertainty and confusion, and will prefer to take refuge from it once more behind his theme 'I can do what I will' and fortify himself there against all grounds and all reasoning. But, as I hope to put beyond all doubt in the following chapter, the corrected answer to his theme would run: 'You can *do* what you *will*: but at each given moment of your life you can *will* only one determined thing and by no means anything other than this one.'

The Royal Society's question would really be answered already by the argument contained in this chapter, and negatively at that; but still only concerning the main point, for even this exposition of the state of affairs in self-consciousness is still to receive some completion in what follows. But in *one* case there is another confirmation of even this negative answer of ours. For if we now turned with the question to that authority we were referred to earlier as the only competent one, that is to the pure understanding, to reason that reflects on its data, and to the experience that comes consequent upon both, and if its verdict should come out that a *liberum arbitrium*^c does not exist at all, and that the acting of a human being, like everything else in nature, follows instead as a necessarily occurring effect in each given case, then this would give us the additional certainty that data from which the *liberum arbitrium* we are asking after could be proved *could never be present* in immediate self-consciousness. From this, by way of the inference *a non posse ad non esse*,^a which is the only possible way of establishing *negative* truths *a priori*, our verdict would have received a rational grounding in addition to the empirical one previously presented, and thus would be rendered doubly certain. For a decided contradiction between the immediate pronouncements of self-consciousness and the deliverances of the fundamental principles of the pure understanding, together with their application to experience, ought
25 not to be accepted as possible: such a lying self-consciousness cannot be ours. In this connection it is to be remarked that even the supposed antinomy on this theme set up by *Kant*^b is not meant, even by his own lights, to arise from thesis and antithesis issuing from different sources of knowledge, the one from pronouncements of self-consciousness, the other

^c [Free will, free choice]

^a [From not being possible to not being]

^b [See *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 445–451/B 473–479]

from reason and experience; rather, thesis and antithesis both do their reasoning on allegedly objective grounds, though the thesis rests upon nothing at all but idle reason, i.e. the need to come to a stop at some time or other in the regress, while the antithesis by contrast really has all objective grounds in its favour.

So this *indirect* investigation that is now to be undertaken, keeping within the field of the cognitive faculty and the external world that lies before it, will straight away throw much light back upon the *direct* investigation achieved so far. It will thus serve to extend that investigation by uncovering the natural illusions that arise through false interpretation of that so very simple pronouncement of self-consciousness, when the latter comes into conflict with the consciousness of other things, which is the cognitive faculty and is rooted in the same subject along with self-consciousness. Indeed, it is only at the conclusion of this indirect investigation that some light will dawn for us upon the true sense and content of that 'I will' that accompanies all our actions and upon the consciousness of the originality^a and independence^b through which they are *our* actions; and in this way the direct investigation conducted so far will first attain its completion.

^a *Ursprünglichkeit*

^b *Eigenmächtigkeit*

III THE WILL BEFORE CONSCIOUSNESS OF OTHER THINGS

If now we turn with our problem to the cognitive faculty,¹³ we know in advance that, since this faculty is essentially directed outwards, the will cannot be an object of immediate perception for it, as it was for the self-consciousness that was nonetheless found incompetent on our topic. Rather, we know that here can be considered only those *beings* endowed with a will that are present before the cognitive faculty as objective and external appearances, i.e. as objects of experience, and are to be investigated and judged as such, partly in accordance with *a priori* certain rules that are universal and hold for experience in general according to its possibility, partly in accordance with the states of affairs that experience delivers when achieved and actually present. Thus here we have to do no longer with the *will* itself as it lies open only to inner sense, but with willing *beings moved by the will*, which are objects of outer sense. If because of this we are put at the disadvantage of having to consider the proper object of our enquiry only mediately and from a greater distance, that is outweighed by the advantage that we can now avail ourselves in our investigation of a much more perfect organ^a than that obscure, dull, one-sided, direct self-consciousness, or so-called inner sense, was – namely of the *understanding*, which is equipped with all its outer senses and all its powers for *objective* apprehension.

As the most universal and fundamentally essential form of this understanding we find the *law of causality*, since it is through the mediation of this alone that intuition of the real external world comes into being. In intuition we grasp the affections and alterations felt in our sense organs at once and quite immediately as *effects* and in an instant (without training, teaching or experience) make the transition from them to their *causes*, which then through this very process of the understanding present themselves as *objects in space*.^{*} From this it becomes incontrovertibly clear that the *law of causality* is known to us *a priori*, and consequently as something *necessary* with respect to the possibility of all experience – without our needing the indirect, difficult and indeed unsatisfying proof that *Kant* gave for this important truth.^b The law of causality stands firm *a priori* as the universal rule to which all real objects in the external world without exception are subordinated. It owes this lack of exception precisely to its

* The full exposition of this doctrine can be found in the Essay on the Principle of Sufficient Reason, §21 of the second edition.

^a *Organon*

^b [See *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 189–211/B 232–256]

apriority. The same law relates essentially and exclusively to *alterations*, and it states that wherever and whenever, in the objective, real, material world, anything at all, large or small, *alters*, by much or by little, then necessarily something else must also have *altered* just *beforehand*, and in order for *this* thing to *alter*, before it another again, and so on into infinity, without any starting point to this regressive series of alterations – which fills time as matter fills space – ever being foreseen, or even merely thought as possible, let alone presupposed. For the tirelessly self-renewing question ‘What gave rise to this alteration?’ never grants the understanding a final resting point, however much it may tire in the process: which is why a first cause is just as unthinkable as a beginning of time or a limit of space. – No less does the law of causality state that if the earlier alteration – *the cause* – has occurred, the later one brought about by it – *the effect* – must occur quite inevitably, and so follows *necessarily*. Through this character of *necessity* the law of causality shows itself to be a version of the *Principle of Sufficient Reason*, which is the most universal form of our cognitive faculty as a whole, and which appears in the real world as causality, and likewise in the world of thoughts as the logical law of the ground of cognition, and even in empty but *a priori* intuited space as the strictly necessary dependence of the position of all parts of the same upon one another – proving this necessary dependence specially and completely being the sole task of geometry. This is why, as I explained at the outset, *being necessary* and *being consequence of a given ground* are interchangeable concepts.

28

All *alterations* that happen to objects^a that are objective,^b situated in the real external world, are therefore subordinate to the law of *causality*, and so always occur, whenever and wherever they occur, as *necessary* and inevitable. – There cannot be an exception to this, because the rule stands firm *a priori* for all possibility of experience. But in respect of the rule’s *application* to a given case it merely has to be asked whether it concerns an *alteration* in a real object given in outer experience: once this is so, its alterations fall under the application of the law of causality, i.e. they must be brought about by a cause, and by that very token must be brought about *necessarily*.

If, with our universal, *a priori* certain rule, which is therefore valid for all possible experience without exception, we now approach that experience more closely and consider the real objects given in it, to the occurrence of whose alterations our rule relates, then straight away we notice in these objects some deeply penetrating, fundamental distinctions under which

^a Gegenstände

^b objektiv

29 they have long been classified: that is, they are partly inorganic, i.e. lifeless, partly organic, i.e. living, and the latter in turn partly plants, partly animals. We find these last in turn, though similar to one another in essence and in accord with their concept, in an exceedingly multifarious and finely nuanced sequence of levels of perfection, from those that are still closely related to the plant and hard to distinguish from it, right up to the most complete, corresponding most perfectly to the concept of an animal: at the peak of this sequence of levels we see the human being – ourselves.

If now, without letting ourselves become bewildered by that multiplicity, we consider all these beings collectively merely as objective, real objects of experience, and accordingly progress to the application of our law of causality, which stands firm *a priori* for the possibility of all experience, then we shall find that experience does indeed come out everywhere in line with the *a priori* certain law; and yet to the great *difference* in the nature of all those objects of experience we have brought into recollection there corresponds also a proportionate modification in the manner in which causality stakes its claim upon them. More closely: in correspondence with the threefold distinction of inorganic bodies, plants and animals, the causality that governs all their alterations likewise shows itself in three forms, namely as *cause* in the narrowest sense of the word, or as *stimulus*, or as *motivation*, without its validity *a priori*, or, therefore, the established necessity of the consequence, being impugned in the slightest by this modification.

The *cause* in the narrowest sense of the word is that by means of which all mechanical, physical and chemical alterations in objects of experience occur. It is everywhere characterized by two distinguishing marks: first, that in its case Newton's third fundamental law 'action and counter-action'^a are equal to one another' finds its application: i.e. the preceding state, which is called cause, experiences an equal alteration to the succeeding state, which is called effect.^b – Secondly, that, in accordance with Newton's second law,¹⁴ the degree of the effect is precisely proportional to the degree of the cause, with the consequence that an intensification of the latter also brings about an equal intensification of the former; so that as soon as the nature of the effect is known, from the degree of intensity of the cause the degree of the effect can also be known, measured and calculated straight away, and *vice versa*.
30 In empirical application of this second distinguishing mark we ought not, however, to confuse the genuine effect with its superficial appearance.

^a *Wirkung und Gegenwirkung*

^b *Wirkung*

E.g. we should not expect that, in the compression of a body, its expanse will always decrease in the proportion in which the compressing force increases. For the space we force the body into constantly decreases, and consequently the resistance increases: and although here too the genuine effect, which is contraction, really grows in accordance with the cause, as Mariotte's law states; yet this is not to be grasped from the aforementioned superficial appearance of it. Further, in many cases the whole nature of the effect will change all at once at certain determinate degrees of influence,^c which really happens because the nature of the counter-effect changes, because in a body of finite size its previous form is exhausted. Thus, e.g.,¹⁵ warmth introduced to water will effect heating up to a certain degree, but beyond this degree only rapid evaporation: in the latter's case, however, the same proportion between the degree of the cause and that of the effect arises once again, and so it is in many cases.¹⁶ It is such *causes in the narrowest sense* that effect the alterations in all *lifeless*, i.e. *inorganic* bodies. The cognition and presupposition of causes of this kind governs the treatment of all the alterations that are the object of mechanics, hydro-dynamics, physics and chemistry. Hence being exclusively determined by causes of this kind alone is the genuine and essential distinguishing mark of an inorganic or lifeless body.

The second kind of cause is *stimulus*, i.e. the sort of cause that, firstly, undergoes *no* counter-effect itself in proportion to its influence, and in which, secondly, no equality whatsoever pertains between its intensity and the intensity of the effect. Consequently here the degree of the effect cannot be measured and determined in advance from the degree of the cause: rather, a small increase in the stimulus can cause a very great increase in the effect, or even conversely remove the previous effect altogether, or indeed bring about an opposed one. E.g. plants can, as we know, be pushed to an exceptionally fast growth by warmth or by chalk mixed into the earth, in that these causes have the effect of stimuli for their life force: yet if in the process the proportionate degree of the stimulus is exceeded by a little, then instead of a heightened and accelerated life the consequence will be the death of the plant. In the same way we can stretch and considerably heighten our mental powers through wine or opium, but if the correct measure of the stimulus is exceeded, then the consequence will be exactly the opposite. – It is causes of this kind, that is *stimuli*, that determine all alterations of organisms *as such*. All alterations and developments of plants, and all merely organic and vegetative alterations or functions of animal

31

^c *Einwirkung*

bodies proceed upon *stimuli*. It is in this manner that light, warmth, air, nourishment, every drug, every touch, fertilization and so on, have an effect upon them. – While the life of animals has a quite other sphere as well, which I shall speak of soon, the entire life of *plants*, by contrast, proceeds exclusively according to *stimuli*. All their assimilation, growth, striving towards the light with their crown, with their roots towards better soil, their fertilization, germination, and so on, is alteration upon *stimuli*. In a few individual species there is in addition a peculiar fast movement which likewise follows only upon stimuli, but by virtue of which they are called sensitive plants. As is well known, these are principally *Mimosa pudica*, *Hedysarum gyrans* and *Dionaea muscipula*.^a Being determined exclusively and without exception by *stimuli* is the character of plants. So a *plant* is that body whose peculiar movements and alterations in accordance with its nature follow always and exclusively upon *stimuli*.

32 The third kind of moving causes is that which marks out the character of *animals*: it is *motivation*, i.e. causality that goes through *cognition*. It occurs in the sequence of levels of natural beings at the point where the more complicated being, which therefore has multiple needs, can no longer satisfy them merely on the occasion of stimulus, which has to be waited for, but must be in a position to choose, to grasp, indeed to seek out the means of satisfaction. That is why in beings of this kind, in place of mere receptivity for *stimuli* and movement upon them, there occurs receptivity for *motives*, i.e. a faculty for representation, an intellect, in countless sub-levels of perfection, presenting itself materially as nervous system and brain, and along with this consciousness. That animal life has a plant-life that serves as its basis and that as such proceeds merely upon *stimuli*, is well known. But all the movements that the animal completes as an *animal*, and which precisely for that reason depend on what physiology calls *animal functions*, happen in consequence of an object cognized and so upon *motives*. Accordingly, an *animal* is that body whose peculiar external movements and alterations in accordance with its nature always follow upon *motives*, i.e. upon certain representations that are present to its already presupposed consciousness. Whatever unending gradations the capacity for representations, and along with it consciousness, may have in the sequence of animals, so much of it is available^a in each of them that the motive presents itself in it and occasions its movement: upon which the inner moving force, whose particular expression is called forth by the motive,

^a [Common names for these plants are: Sensitive Plant, Telegraph Plant (or Semaphore Plant) and Venus Flytrap]

^a *vorhanden*

reveals itself to the available self-consciousness as that which we designate with the word *will*.

Now whether a given body moves upon *stimuli* or upon *motives* can never remain in doubt, even for observation from outside, which is our standpoint here: so obviously different is the nature of the effect in a stimulus from that in a motive. For stimulus is always effective through touch, or indeed intussusception, and even where it is not visible, such as where the stimulus is air, light or warmth, it nonetheless betrays itself in that the effect has an unmistakable relation to the duration and intensity of the stimulus, even though this relation does not remain the same in all degrees of the stimulus. On the other hand, where a *motive* causes the movement, all such distinctions fall away entirely. For here the genuine and closest medium of influence is not the atmosphere but simply and solely *cognition*. The object which has effect as a motive needs nothing whatsoever apart from *being perceived, cognized*; while it is quite indifferent for how long it came into apperception, whether far off or nearby, and how clearly it did so. Here all these distinctions do not alter the degree of the effect at all: once the motive has simply been perceived, it has effect in just the same way – assuming that it is anyway a determining ground of the will that is to be roused here. For even physical and chemical causes, likewise stimuli, have their effect only in so far as the body to be affected is *receptive* to them. Just now I said ‘will that is to be roused’: for, as already mentioned, that which genuinely imparts to the motive the power to affect, the secret spring of the movement called forth by it,¹⁷ is here revealed to the being itself, inwardly and immediately, as that which the word *will* designates. In the case of bodies that move exclusively upon stimuli (plants) we call that persisting inner condition life force; in bodies that move solely upon causes in the narrowest sense we call it natural force, or quality. It is always presupposed by explanations as the inexplicable, because here in the inside of the being there is no self-consciousness for it to be accessible to. But whether this inner condition of their reaction to external causes, present in such beings without cognition, indeed without life, might perhaps, if someone wanted to depart from appearance in general and enquire into what Kant calls the thing in itself, be identical in its essence with that which in ourselves we call the *will*, as a philosopher of recent times has really wanted to demonstrate for us – this I leave to one side, though without wanting to contradict it directly.^{*,18}

33

* It is evident that here I mean myself and could not speak in the first person simply because of the required incognito.

34

On the other hand, I ought not to leave undiscussed that difference within motivation that gives rise to what distinguishes human consciousness ahead of any animal consciousness. This, which the word *reason* properly designates, consists in the fact that the human being is not, like the animal, capable merely of an *intuitive* apprehension of the external world, but is able to abstract from it universal concepts (*notiones universales*), which, so as to fix them in his sensible consciousness and hold them firm, he designates with words and makes countless combinations of them. These, in common with the concepts of which they consist, do relate to the world cognized in intuition, but properly constitute what we call *thinking*, from which the great advances of the human species beyond all others become possible, namely speech, thoughtfulness,^a reflection on what is past, care for what is to come, intention, design, the planned collective action of many, the state, sciences, arts and so forth. All of this rests on the single capacity to have non-intuitive, abstract, universal representations, which we call *concepts*^b (i.e. summations^c of things), because each of them comprehends^d many individuals under itself. Animals, even the cleverest of all, go without this capacity: hence they have none other than *intuitive* representations and consequently know only what is directly present, live in the present alone. The motives by which their will is moved must, therefore, always be intuitive and present. But the consequence of this is that they are granted extremely little *choice*, in fact merely between things that lie before their own restricted field of vision and faculty of apprehension, hence what is present in time and space, the stronger of which at once determines their will as motive – by which the causality of the motive here becomes very conspicuous.

An *apparent* exception is made by *training*, which is fear having an effect through the medium of habit; an exception that is *genuine* to some extent is instinct, in so far as the animal, in its *whole* manner of acting, is not really set in movement by motives in this case, but by inner pull and drive, which, however, receives its closer determination through motives in the detail of *particular* actions and for each moment, and so reverts to the rule. The closer discussion of instinct would here lead me too far away from my theme: the 27th chapter of the second volume of my main work is devoted to it. – The human being, on the other hand, by virtue of his capacity for *non-intuitive* representations, by means of which he *thinks and reflects*, has

^a *Besonnenheit*

^b *Begriffe*

^c *Inbegriffe*

^d *begreift*

an infinitely wider field of vision, which embraces what is absent, past, and future: because of this he has a sphere for the influence of motives, and consequently for choice as well, very much greater than that of an animal that is restricted to the narrow present. It is not as a rule what lies before his sensible intuition, what is present in space and time, that determines his doing: rather it is mere *thoughts*, which he carries around with him everywhere in his head and which make him independent of the impression of the present. But if they fail to do this, we call his action irrational:^a on the other hand, it is praised as *rational*^b if it is completed exclusively after well deliberated thoughts and so quite independently of the impression of the intuitive present. Precisely this fact, that the human being is activated^c by a class of representations of his own (abstract concepts, thoughts) not possessed by the animal, is also outwardly visible in that it impresses on all his doings, even the least significant, and indeed on all his movements and steps, the character of the *deliberate and intentional*. This makes his behaviour^d so conspicuously different from that of an animal that one sees straight off how, as it were, fine, invisible threads (motives that consist of mere thoughts) steer his movements, while those of the animal are pulled by the coarse, visible ropes of what is present in intuition. But the difference goes no further. The thought becomes a *motive*, just as the intuition becomes a *motive*, as soon as it is able to have effect upon the available will. But all motives are causes, and all causality brings necessity with it. By means of his capacity for thought the human being can make present to himself the motives whose influence on his will he senses, in any order he likes, in alternation and repeatedly, to hold them before his will, which is called *reflecting*: he is able to deliberate, and because of this ability has a much greater *choice* than is possible for an animal. Because of this he is indeed *relatively free*, that is, free from the immediate compulsion of objects *present in intuition* affecting his will as motives, to which the animal as such is subjected: he, by contrast, determines himself independently of present objects, according to thoughts which are *his* motives. And it is fundamentally this *relative* freedom that people who are educated, but who do not think deeply, understand as the free will that human beings patently have as an advantage over an animal. Yet it is merely *relative*, namely in connection with what is present in intuition, and merely *comparative*, namely in comparison with the *animal*. What it alters is quite

^a unvernünftig

^b vernünftig

^c aktuiert

^d Treiben

36 solely *the kind* of motivation, while the *necessity* of the motive's effect is not removed in the slightest, nor even so much as diminished. The *abstract* motive that consists merely in a *thought* is just as much an external cause determining the will as the intuitive motive that consists in a real, present object: consequently it is a cause like any other. It is even, like the others, always something real, material, in so far as it always rests ultimately on an impression received somewhere and at some time *from outside*. Its sole advantage is the length of the conducting wire – by which I wish to indicate that it is not bound to a certain proximity in space and time like merely *intuitive* motives, but rather can have its effect through the greatest distance, through the longest time and through a mediation of concepts and thoughts in a long chain. This is a consequence of the constitution and eminent receptivity of the organ that first experiences and registers its influence, that is, the human brain, or *reason*. And yet this does not in the least remove its *causal nature*^a and the *necessity* posited with it. Thus only a very superficial viewpoint can take that relative and comparative freedom for an absolute freedom, a *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*. The capacity for deliberation that arises through that freedom in fact produces nothing other than the frequently troubling *conflict of motives*, over which indecision presides, and whose battle ground is the entire mind and consciousness of the human being. For he repeatedly allows the motives to try their force upon his will in competition with one another, whereby the will gets into the same state that a body is in when different forces work in different directions – until finally the decidedly strongest motive beats the others off the field and determines the will, an outcome that is called a resolve, and that occurs with full *necessity* as the result of the conflict.

37 If we now review once again the entire series of forms of causality, in which *causes* in the narrowest sense separate themselves clearly from *stimuli* and finally from *motives*, which in turn divide into intuitive and abstract; then we shall observe that as we traverse the series of beings from bottom to top in this way, the cause and its effect diverge from one another more and more, separate from one another more clearly and become more heterogeneous, with the cause becoming less and less material and palpable, so that less and less seems to lie in the cause and more and more in the effect. Because of all of this put together the connection between cause and effect loses in immediate graspability and intelligibility. Indeed, everything just stated is least the case with *mechanical* causality, which is therefore the

^a *Ursächlichkeit*

easiest of all to grasp. In the last century there arose out of this the false attempt, which still persists in France and more recently has sprung up in Germany too,¹⁹ to reduce all the others to this causality, and to explain all physical and chemical processes by mechanical causes, and from the former in turn the life process. The body that pushes moves the one that rests, and loses as much motion as it imparts; here we see, as it were, the cause cross over into the effect – both are quite homogeneous, precisely commensurable and palpable too. And it is really like this with all purely mechanical effects. But it will be found that all of this is less and less the case the higher we ascend, and that what we said above applies, if at every level we consider the relation between cause and effect, e.g. between heat as cause and its different effects, such as expansion, glowing, melting, evaporation, combustion, thermo-electricity etc., or between vaporization as cause and cooling, or crystallization, as effects; or between the rubbing of glass as cause and free electricity with its strange phenomena as effect; or between slow oxidation of plates as cause and galvanism, with all its electrical, chemical, magnetic phenomena as effect. Thus cause and effect *separate* more and more, become more *heterogeneous*, their connection *more unintelligible*, the effect seems to contain more than the cause could have supplied to it; for the cause shows itself as increasingly less material and palpable. All of this applies even more clearly if we make a transition to *organic* bodies, where mere *stimuli* are the causes – in part external such as those of light, heat, air, the earth, nutrition, in part internal, those of the fluids and parts in relation to one another – and where life presents itself as their effect, in its endless complication and countless differences of kind, in the manifold forms of the plant and animal worlds.*

38

So, throughout this ever increasing heterogeneity, incommensurability and unintelligibility of the relation between cause and effect, has the *necessity* it presupposes also decreased at all? In no way, not in the slightest. As necessarily as the rolling ball sets the one at rest in motion, so too must the Leyden flask discharge itself when touched by the other hand, so must arsenic kill any living thing, so must the seed grain that was stored dry and showed no alteration through millennia²⁰ germinate, grow and develop into a plant as soon as it is placed in the appropriate soil and exposed to the influences of air, light, heat and moisture. The cause is more complicated, the effect more heterogeneous, but the necessity with which it occurs is not one hair's breadth smaller.

* The more thorough exposition of this divergence of cause and effect can be found in *On The Will in Nature*, under the heading 'Astronomy', pp. 80ff. of the second edition [Hübscher SW 4, 86–90].

39

In the life of plants and in the vegetative life of animals, though the stimulus is extremely different in every respect from the organic function called forth by it, and both are clearly separated, they are not yet properly *divided*; rather there must exist a contact between them, however fine and invisible it may be. Total division occurs only in animal life, whose actions^a are called forth by motives, so that the cause, which hitherto always maintained a material connection with the effect, now stands quite torn away from it, is of a quite other nature, something in the first place immaterial, a mere representation. Thus in the *motive*, which calls forth the movement of the animal, the heterogeneity between cause and effect, the separation of the two from one another, their incommensurability, the immateriality of the cause and consequently its apparent containment of too little, have reached their highest degree, and the ungraspability of the relation between the two would intensify into an absolute ungraspability, if, as with all remaining causal relations, we knew this one merely *from outside*;²¹ but here a quite different kind of cognition, an *inner* cognition, complements the outer, and we are intimately acquainted with the process that here takes place as effect after the cause occurs: we designate it with a specially coined term:^b will. And yet the causal relation has sacrificed none of its *necessity* even here, any more than in the case of the stimulus above, a fact we express as soon as we recognize it as a *causal relation* and think of it in accordance with this form that is essential to our understanding. Further, we find motivation fully analogous to the other two variants of the causal relation discussed above, and as only the highest level, towards which they rise in quite gradual transition. At the lowest levels of animal life the *motive* is still closely related to the *stimulus*: zoophytes, radiaria in general, and the acephala among molluscs, have only a faint glimmering of consciousness, just as much as is needed to perceive their nourishment or prey and seize it for themselves when it is available, and to change their place for a more favourable one if it comes to that: so at these low levels the effect of the motive is present before us as clearly, immediately and unambiguously as that of the stimulus. Small insects are drawn by the shining of light even into the flame: flies sit trustingly on the head of the lizard that has just swallowed one of their kind before their very eyes.^a Who will dream of freedom here? With higher, more intelligent animals the effect of the motive becomes more and more mediate: that is, the motive divides more

^a *Actionen*

^b *terminus ad hoc*

^a [In the Norwegian edition of the essay (N) Schopenhauer writes of this as something 'I often saw in Italy.']

clearly from the action which it calls forth; so that one can even use this difference in distance between motive and action as the measure of animals' intelligence. In the human being it becomes immeasurable. By contrast, even in the cleverest animals the representation that becomes the motive of their doing must always remain an *intuitive* one: even where a choice does indeed become possible, it can take place only between what is present in intuition. The dog stands hesitating between the call of his master and the sight of a bitch: the stronger motive will determine his movement, but then it will follow as necessarily as a mechanical effect. For in that case too we see a body that is brought out of equilibrium wobble for a time alternately to one side and the other, until it is decided where its centre of gravity lies and it falls down towards it. As long as motivation is restricted to *intuitive* representations, its relationship with stimulus and cause as such remains obvious, because the motive, as effective cause, must be something real, something present, and indeed must physically have an effect on the senses, even if very mediately, by way of light, sound or smell. Furthermore the cause lies before the observer here as openly as the effect: he sees the motive occur and the doing of the animal follow inevitably, as long as no other equally obvious motive, or training, has a counter-effect. It is impossible to doubt the connection between the two. So it will not occur to anyone to attribute to the animal a *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*, i.e. a doing determined by no cause.

40

But where the consciousness is a rational one, that is, one capable of non-intuitive cognition,^b i.e. of concepts and thoughts, then motives become quite independent from the present and the real environment and so remain concealed from the spectator. For now they are mere thoughts that the human being carries around inside his head but whose genesis lies outside it, often at a great distance indeed, sometimes in his own experience from past years, sometimes in extraneous transmission through words and writing, even from the most distant times, yet in such a way that their *origin is always real and objective* – although, because of the often difficult combination of complicated external circumstances, there are among motives many errors and many deceptions owing to the transmission, and consequently many stupidities too. To this is added the fact that a human being often conceals the motives for his deeds from all others, at times even from himself, namely where he shies away from acknowledging what it really is that moves him to do this or that. Meanwhile we see his doings take place and seek by conjectures to fathom the motives, which we presuppose

^b *nichtanschauende Erkenntnis*

41 as firmly and confidently as we do the cause of any movement of lifeless bodies we might have seen take place, in the conviction that the one just as the other is impossible without a cause. Conversely, in our own plans and undertakings we likewise bring the effect of motives upon human beings into consideration with a certainty that would fully equal that with which we calculate the mechanical effects of mechanical devices, if we knew the individual characters of the people we have to deal with as precisely as we know the length and thickness of beams, the diameter of wheels, the weight of loads etc. in that case.²² Anyone complies with this presupposition as long as he looks outwards, has to do with others, and pursues practical ends: for the human understanding is determined^a for such ends. But if he tries to judge the matter theoretically and philosophically, something for which human intelligence is really not determined, and now makes himself the object of the judgment, then he allows himself to be misled by what we portrayed just now, the immaterial nature of abstract motives that consist of mere thoughts, because they are bound to no present and no environment and find even their hindrances in turn in mere thoughts, as counter-motives – so misled that he doubts their existence, or again the necessity of the effect, and holds that what is done could just as well remain absent, that the will decides by itself without cause and that each of its acts was a first beginning of an unforeseeable series of alterations brought about by it. This error is supported quite specifically by the false interpretation of the pronouncement of self-consciousness ‘I can do what I will’ that we examined at length in the first chapter, especially if it is heard when, as always, various motives are exerting an influence and are merely soliciting and excluding one another for the time being. So this taken together is the source of that natural illusion out of which grows the error that in our self-consciousness there is the certainty of a freedom of our will, in the sense that, contrary to all laws of pure understanding and of nature, it is something that decides without sufficient grounds, and that its decisions, in given circumstances, could turn out in one way or in the opposite way in one and the same human being.

42 To give a specific and maximally clear explanation of the genesis of this error – which is so important for our theme – and thereby to supplement the investigation of self-consciousness presented in the previous chapter, let us think of a human being who, while standing in the street, say, might say to himself: ‘It is six o’clock in the evening, the day’s work is ended. I can now go for a walk; or I can go to the club; I can also climb the

^a *bestimmt*

tower to see the sun going down; I can also go to the theatre; I can also visit this friend, or again that one; yes, I can even run out of the gate into the wide world and never return. All of that is solely up to me, I have total freedom over it; and yet I am doing none of that now, but am going home with just as much free will, to my wife.' That is exactly as if water were to speak: 'I can strike up high waves (yes! in the sea and storm), I can rush down in a hurry (yes! in the bed of a stream), I can fall down foaming and spraying (yes! in a waterfall), I can rise freely as a jet into the air (yes! in a fountain), finally I can even boil away and disappear (yes! at 80° of heat); and yet I am doing none of all that now, but I am staying with free will calm and clear in the mirroring pond.' Just as water can do all of that only when the determining causes to one thing or the other occur, so that human being can in no way do what he imagines he can do except under the same condition. Until the causes occur it is impossible for him: but then he *must* do it, just as much as the water when it is placed in the corresponding circumstances. His error, and the whole illusion that arises here from falsely interpreted self-consciousness, that he could now do all of that equally, rests, precisely considered, on the fact that in his imagination^a only *one* picture can be present at a time and excludes everything else for the moment. So if he presents to himself the motive for one of those actions proposed as possible, he will instantly feel its effect on his will, which is being solicited by it: this, according to the term of art, is called a *velleitas*.^b But now he thinks he could elevate this to a *voluntas*^c as well, i.e. carry out the proposed action; only this is illusion. For straight away reflection would set in and bring into his recollection the motives that pull in other directions, or stand in opposition; whereupon he would see that the deed does not come about. With such a successive representing of different motives that exclude one another, to the constant accompaniment of the inner 'I can do what I will', it is as if the will, like a weathervane on a well-greased pivot and in an inconstant wind, turns instantly towards any motive that the imagination holds before it, successively towards all motives that are presented as possible, and of each one the human being thinks he could *will* it and fix the vane at this point – which is mere illusion. For his 'I can will this' is in truth hypothetical and carries with it the sub-clause 'if I did not prefer to will that other thing'; but this removes the being-able-to-will.^d – Let us return to that supposed

43

^a *Phantasie*^b [wishing]^c [willing]^d *Wollenkönnen*

human being deliberating at 6 o'clock and imagine that he now notices that I am standing behind him, philosophizing about him and disputing his freedom to do all those actions that are possible to him; it could easily happen that in order to refute me he would carry out one of them: but then precisely my denial and its effect on his spirit of contradiction would have been the motive that necessitated him to do it. And still that would have been able to move him only to one or other of the *easier* among the above-mentioned actions, e.g. going to the theatre; not at all to the one named last, running off into the wide world – this motive would be far too weak for that. – Just as erroneously many a person thinks, while he holds a loaded pistol in his hand, that he could shoot himself with it. But the least thing required for that is the mechanical means of execution, whereas the main thing is an exceedingly strong and hence rare motive that has the uncanny power needed to outweigh the lust for life, or more correctly the fear of death. Only when such a motive has occurred can he really shoot himself, and then he must do so – unless an even stronger counter-motive, if such is possible at all, were to prevent the deed.

44 I can do what I will: I can, *if I will*, give all that I have to the poor and so become one of them myself – if I *will*! But I cannot^a *will* it, because the opposing motives have much too much power over me for me to be able to. By contrast, if I had another character, and indeed to the extent that I was a saint, then I would be able to will it; but then I would not be able to avoid willing it, and so would have to do it. – All this coheres perfectly well with the 'I can *do* what I *will*' of self-consciousness, in which even these days some thoughtless philosophasters think they see the freedom of the will, and consequently make it valid as a given fact of consciousness. Among them Mr Cousin distinguishes himself, and on those grounds merits an honourable mention^b since in his *Course on the History of Philosophy*,^c presented in 1819 and 1820 and published by Vacherot, 1841, he teaches that the freedom of the will is the most reliable fact of consciousness (vol. 1, pp. 19, 20), and blames *Kant* for having merely proved it from the moral law and established it as a postulate, when all along it is a fact: 'why prove that which it suffices to state?'^d (p. 50), 'freedom is a fact, and not a belief'^e (*ibid.*) – Meanwhile in Germany too there is no lack of ignorants, who cast to the wind everything that great thinkers have said on the matter

^a *vermag nicht*

^b *mention honorable*

^c *Cours d'histoire de la philosophie*

^d *pourquoi démontrer ce qu'il suffit de constater?*

^e *la liberté est un fait, et non une croyance*

for two centuries, and, priding themselves on the fact of self-consciousness analysed in the previous chapter, falsely construed by them as by the great masses, preconize the freedom of the will as factually given. But perhaps I am doing them an injustice. For it might be that they are not as unknowing as they seem, but simply hungry, and so, for a very dry piece of bread, teach everything that could be pleasing to a high ministry.²³

It is definitely neither metaphor nor hyperbole, but a quite dry and literal truth, that just as a ball cannot start into motion on a billiard table until it receives an impact, no more can a human being stand up from his chair until a motive draws or drives him away: but then his standing up is as necessary and inevitable as the ball's rolling after the impact. And to expect that someone will do something towards which no interest calls him is like expecting that a piece of wood will move towards me without a rope to pull it.²⁴ Someone who was asserting this in some company and met with stubborn opposition would get out of the predicament in the briefest time if he had a third person shout out in a loud voice, 'The rafters are caving in!' By this means the opponent would gain the insight that a motive is just as powerful for ejecting the people from the house as the most cast-iron mechanical cause.

45

For the human being is, like all objects of experience, an appearance in time and space, and since the law of causality is valid *a priori* for all objects and so without exception, he too must be subordinate to it. This is what pure understanding *a priori* says, this is what the analogy carried right through nature confirms, and this is what experience bears witness to every moment, if one does not allow oneself to be deceived by the illusion brought about by the fact that, as natural beings advance higher and higher and become more complicated, and their receptivity improves and refines itself from the merely mechanical to the chemical, the electrical, irritable, sensible, intellectual and finally the rational, the nature of the *effective causes*^a must also keep in step with this and come out at every level in correspondence with the beings that the effect is to be worked upon – for which reason the causes also present themselves less and less palpably and materially, so that in the end they are no longer visible to the eye, though they are accessible to the understanding, which presupposes them with unshakeable confidence in the particular case and also discovers them upon appropriate investigation. For here the effective causes have advanced to mere thoughts, which fight with other thoughts until the most powerful of them tips the balance and sets the human being in motion – all of

^a *einwirkenden Ursachen*

which happens with just such a strictness in the causal connection as when purely mechanical causes work against one another in a complicated relation and the calculated consequence occurs inevitably. Electrified cork balls hopping around in all directions in a glass have the visual appearance of causelessness, because of the invisible nature of the cause, just as much as the movements of a human being: but the judgment falls not to the eye, but to the understanding.

46 Under presupposition of free will each human action would be an inexplicable miracle – an effect without cause.²⁵ And if one dares the attempt to make such a *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae* imaginable to oneself, one will soon become aware that here the understanding quite genuinely comes to a standstill: it has no form for thinking of such a thing. For the principle of sufficient reason, the principle of thoroughgoing determination and dependence of appearances upon one another, is the most general form of our cognitive faculty, which itself also assumes different guises in accordance with the difference in that faculty's objects. But here we are supposed to think of something that determines without being determined, that depends upon nothing while the other thing depends upon it, something that without necessitation,^a and so without ground, brings about effect A, while it could equally well have brought about B, or C, or D, and indeed could have done so absolutely,^b could have done so in the same circumstances, i.e. without there now being anything in A that gave it precedence over B, C and D (for that would be motivation, and hence causality). We are here brought back to the concept of the *absolutely contingent* that we established as problematic right at the beginning. I repeat: here the understanding quite genuinely comes to a standstill, if one is but capable of bringing it to this point.

Now, however, let us remind ourselves also of what a *cause* as such is: the preceding alteration that makes the succeeding alteration necessary. In no way does any cause in the world bring about its effect absolutely or make it out of nothing. Rather something is invariably there on which it has its effect, and only at this time, at this place, and in this determinate being does it occasion an alteration, which is always in accordance with the nature of the being, and for which the *force*^c must therefore have lain ready in this being. So every effect springs from two factors, one inner and one outer: that is, from the original force of that on which the effect is worked,

^a *Nöthigung*

^b *ganz und gar*

^c *Kraft*

and the determining cause that necessitates the former to manifest itself here and now. Original force is presupposed by every causality and every explanation involving it: which is why the latter never explains everything, but always leaves over something inexplicable. We see this in the whole of physics and chemistry: everywhere in their explanations natural forces^d are presupposed that manifest themselves in the phenomena, and the whole of explanation consists in tracing back to these. A natural force is not subject to any explanation, but is the principle of all explanation. In just the same way it is itself not subject to any causality, but is rather that which 47 lends to each cause its causality, i.e. its capacity to have an effect. It is itself the common substrate^a of all effects of this kind and present in every one of them. In this way the phenomena of magnetism are traced back to an original force called electricity.²⁶ At this point explanation comes to a standstill, stating only the conditions under which such a force manifests itself, i.e. the causes which call forth its effectiveness. The explanations of celestial mechanics presuppose gravitation as a force, by means of which the particular causes that determine the paths of the heavenly bodies operate. The explanations of chemistry presuppose the hidden forces that manifest themselves as elective affinities^b in accordance with certain stoichiometric relationships, on which forces ultimately rest all the effects that promptly occur when called forth by stated causes. In the same way all explanations in physiology presuppose the life force,^c which reacts in determinate fashion to specific internal and external stimuli. And everywhere it is like this throughout. Even those causes that are the concern of the most readily graspable mechanics, such as impact and pressure, have as presuppositions impenetrability, cohesion, rigidity, hardness, inertia, weight, elasticity – which are no less ungrounded natural forces than those just mentioned. Thus everywhere causes determine nothing further than the where and when of the *manifestations* of original, inexplicable forces, and solely under presupposition of these are they causes, i.e. do they bring about certain effects necessarily.

Now just as all this is the case with causes in the narrowest sense and with stimuli, it is no less the case with *motives* – given that motivation is not essentially different from causality, but merely a kind of it, namely causality that proceeds through the medium of cognition. So here too the cause calls

^d *Naturkräfte*

^a *Unterlage*

^b *Wahlverwandtschaften*

^c *Lebenskraft*

48 forth only the manifestation of a force that is not to be traced back further to causes, and is consequently not to be further explained – a force, which is here called *will*, that we are acquainted with not merely from outside as with other natural forces, but rather, by way of self-consciousness, also from inside and immediately. Only on the presupposition that such a will is present and, in the particular case, that it is of a certain constitution,^d do the causes directed towards it, here called motives, have an effect. This specially and individually determined constitution of the will, because of which the reaction to the same motives is a different one in each human being, makes up what we call his *character*, and indeed, since it is known not *a priori* but through experience, his *empirical character*. It is through this, first of all, that the way in which the various kinds of motive affect a given human being is determined. For²⁷ it lies at the basis of all the effects that motives call forth, just as the general natural forces do with the effects called forth by causes in the narrowest sense, and as the life force does with the effects of stimuli. And like the natural causes, it too is original, unalterable, inexplicable. In animals it is different in each species, in human beings in each individual. Only in the very highest, cleverest animals is a noticeable individual character apparent, albeit with the character of the species thoroughly preponderant.

The character of a human being is: 1) *individual*: it is different in everyone. The character of the species lies at the basis of all, and so the chief properties are found repeated in everyone. But there is such a significant more and less of degree, such a difference in the combination and modification of the properties one with another, that we can assume that the moral distinction of characters equals that of the intellectual capacities, which means a great deal, and that both are incomparably greater than the bodily difference between giant and dwarf, Apollo and Thersites. Hence the effect of the same motive on different human beings is quite different: just as sunlight turns wax white but silver chloride black, heat softens wax but hardens clay. For this reason one cannot predict the deed from knowledge of the motive alone, but must in addition also be acquainted precisely with the character.

49 2) The character of a human being is *empirical*. It is only through experience that one gets to know it, not only in the case of others, but in one's own case too. So one often becomes disappointed with oneself as with others, if one discovers that one does not possess this or that property,

^d *Beschaffenheit*

e.g. justice, unselfishness,^a courage, to the degree that one so fondly supposed. So too, when a difficult choice is before us, our own resolve, like someone else's, remains a secret to ourselves for the time until the choice has been decided: we believe it will fall now on this side, now on that, according to whether this or that motive is held up nearer to the will by cognition and tries out its power^b over it – while the 'I can do what I will' produces the illusion of free will. Finally the stronger motive brings its force^c to bear upon the will, and the choice often turns out other than we at first suspected. So finally no one can know how another will act, nor how he himself will act, in a specific situation, until he has been in it: only after the test has been taken is he certain of the other, and only then of his own self too. But then he is certain: tested friends, tried servants are secure. We treat a human being with whom we are precisely acquainted exactly as any other thing whose properties we have already come to know, and predict with confidence what is to be expected from him and what is not.²⁸ Whoever has done something once will do it again, should the case arise, for good or bad. That is why anyone who is in need of great, extraordinary help will turn to one who has provided proofs of his noble-mindedness; and whoever wants to hire a murderer will look around among those people who have already had their hands in blood. According to Herodotus' tale (VII, 164),^d Gelon of Syracuse was forced into the necessity of entrusting a very large sum of money entirely to one man, and he had to give it to him to take abroad, with free disposition over it: for this he chose Cadmus, who had provided evidence of rare, indeed unprecedented honesty and conscientiousness. His trust was completely vindicated. – Similarly, it is only from experience, and when the opportunity arrives, that there grows that acquaintance with ourselves on which self-trust or mistrust is founded. Depending on whether we have shown soundness of mind,^e courage, honesty, reticence, refinement in some case, or whatever else may be called for, or whether the lack of such virtues has come to light – afterwards, in consequence of the acquaintance we have made with ourselves, we are content with ourselves, or the opposite.²⁹ It is only the precise knowledge of his own empirical character that gives the human being what we call *acquired character*: someone possesses this who knows his own properties, good and bad, precisely, and thereby knows for certain what he may

^a *Uneigennützigkeit* [elsewhere 'disinterestedness']

^b *Kraft*

^c *Gewalt*

^d [Herodotus, *Histories*]

^e *Besonnenheit*

entrust to himself and demand of himself, and what he may not. His own role, which before he merely acted out naturally^f because of his empirical character, he now plays artistically and by method, with steadfastness and breeding, without ever, as we say, falling out of character, which always gives evidence that someone came to be mistaken about himself in a particular case.

3) The character of the human being is *constant*: it stays the same throughout the whole of life. Beneath the changeable mantle of his years, his relationships, even of his knowledge and outlook, there lurks, like a crab in its shell, the identical and intrinsic human being, wholly unalterable and always the same.³⁰ It is merely in direction and material that his character experiences those apparent modifications that are the consequence of the difference in the ages of life and their needs. *The human being never alters*: as he has acted in one case, so he will always act again in completely identical circumstances (though this includes also the correct knowledge of these circumstances). One can obtain the confirmation of this truth from everyday experience: but we receive it most strikingly if we meet an acquaintance again after 20 or 30 years and straight away find him up to precisely the same tricks as in the past. – Although many a person will deny this truth in words, he presupposes it in his acting, in that he never trusts again the one he has once found dishonest, but does rely on the one who has previously proved himself honest. For on the truth in question rests the possibility of all knowledge of human beings and of firm confidence in those who have been tried, tested, proven. Even when such a trust has once let us down, we never say, ‘His character has altered’, but ‘I was mistaken in him’. – On that truth rests the fact that when we wish to judge the moral value of an action, we seek above all to attain certainty about its motive, but that our praise or blame is then directed not to the motive but to the character that allowed itself to be determined by such a motive, as the second factor of this deed that inheres solely in the human being. – On the same truth rests the fact that genuine honour (not knightly or fool’s honour), once lost, can never be restored, but the stain of a single unworthy action sticks to a human being forever, and brands him, as we say. Hence the saying: ‘He who once steals is a lifelong thief.’³¹ – On that truth rests the fact that, if the occasion should ever arise in affairs of state that treachery is desired and so a traitor is sought out, used, and rewarded, prudence demands that he be removed after the aim is achieved, because while circumstances are

^f *naturalisirte*

changeable, his character is unchangeable. – On the same rests the fact that the greatest failure of a dramatic poet is this: that his characters are not sustained, i.e. not carried through, like those portrayed by the great poets, with the constancy and strict consistency of a natural force – as I have corroborated this last point in an extended example from Shakespeare in *Parerga*, vol. 2, § 118, p. 196 in the first edition.^a – Indeed, on the same truth rests the possibility of conscience, in as much as it often holds the misdeeds of our youth before us in old age, as, e.g., with J. J. Rousseau, after 40 years, his having accused the servant Marion of a theft that he himself had committed.^b This is possible only under the presupposition that the character has remained the same without alteration – since otherwise the most ridiculous errors, the crudest ignorance, the strangest stupidities of our youth would not shame us in old age, for things have changed, those were matters of cognition, we have come away from them, have cast them aside long ago like the clothes of our youth. – On the same truth rests the fact that even when he has the clearest cognition, and revulsion indeed about his moral mistakes and transgressions, and even when he has the sincerest resolve towards improvement, a human being still does not really improve, and instead when opportunity is renewed, in spite of earnest resolves and honest promising, he can be found, to his own surprise, on the same path as before. Only his *cognition* is capable of correction; and so he can arrive at the insight that these or those means that he previously applied do not lead to his ends, or bring more disadvantage than gain: then he changes the means, not the ends. The American penitentiary system rests on this: it does not undertake to improve the *character*, the *heart* of the human being, but to set his *head* to rights and show him that he would attain the ends that he strives after unchangeably, because of his character, with far more difficulty and much greater tribulations and dangers on the path of dishonesty he has travelled so far than on that of honesty, labour and contentedness. In general the sphere and realm of all improvement and ennoblement lies in *cognition* alone. The character is unalterable, motives have their effect with necessity: but they have to pass through *cognition*, which is the medium of motives. Yet cognition is capable of the most multifarious expansion, of perpetual correction in countless degrees: all education works towards this. The training of reason, through all kinds of knowledge and insight, is morally important because it opens the access for motives to which,

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^a [The example in the passage Schopenhauer refers to is that of the character of the Earl of Northumberland in *Richard II* and *Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2*]

^b [See *Confessions*, Part I, Book II]

without it, the human being would remain closed. As long as he was unable to understand them, they were unavailable for his will. Thus in the same external circumstances a human being's position the second time round can, after all, be really quite different from the first time: if, that is, it was only in the meantime that he became able to grasp those circumstances correctly and completely – with the result that motives to which he was inaccessible before now have an effect upon him. In this sense the scholastics rightly said: 'the final cause (purpose, motive) moves not according to its real being, but according to its cognized being'.^a But no moral influence reaches further than the correction of cognition, and the undertaking to remove the character faults of a human being through talking and moralizing and thus wanting to re-shape his character itself, his intrinsic morality,^b is just the same as the proposal to transform lead into gold by external influence, or to bring an oak tree, by careful tending, to the point of bearing apricots.

- 53 We find the conviction of the unalterability of character pronounced as indubitable already by *Apuleius* in his *Discourse on Magic*,^c where, defending himself against the accusation of magic, he appeals to his known character and says: 'A certain proof lies in the character of every human being: always disposed by nature in the same way towards virtue or vice, it provides a certain evidential ground for the committing or not committing of a crime.'^{d,32}

4) The individual character is *inborn*: it is no work of art or of circumstances subject to chance, but rather the work of nature itself. It reveals itself already in the child, shows there in small scale what in future it will be in large. Thus two children with the most identical of all educations and surroundings display in clearest fashion the most fundamentally different character: it is the same one that they will carry as old men. It is even inheritable in its fundamental features, though only from the father, the intelligence by contrast from the mother; on this I refer to chapter 43 of the second volume of my main work.

^a *causa finalis (Zweck, Motiv) movet non secundum suum esse reale, sed secundum esse cognitum* [see Suarez, *Disputationes metaphysicae (Metaphysical Disputations)*, disp. XXIII, sect. 7 and 8, though the exact words cited are not found there].

^b *seine eigentliche Moralität*

^c *Oratio de magia*

^d *Certum indicem cujusque animum esse, qui semper eodem ingenio ad virtutem vel ad malitiam moratus, firmum argumentum est accipiendi criminis, aut respuendi* [Part VII, 90].

From this exposition of the essence of the individual character it does indeed follow that virtues and vices are inborn. This truth may be inconvenient for many a prejudice and many a spinning-wheel-philosophy^c with their so-called practical interests, i.e. their small, narrow concepts and their limited children's school outlooks: but it was already the conviction of the father of morals, *Socrates*, who according to *Aristotle's* testimony (*Ethica magna*, I, 9) asserted: 'to be good or bad does not rest with us to come about'.^f What Aristotle cites against this is obviously poor: he also shares that opinion of Socrates and expresses it in clearest fashion in *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, 13: 'For each of us seems to possess his type of character to some extent by nature, since we are just, brave, prone to temperance, or have another feature, immediately from birth.'^g And if one reviews the collective virtues and vices in Aristotle's book *On Virtues and Vices*,^h where they are placed together for a brief summary, then one will find that in real human beings they can collectively be thought only as *inborn* properties and that only as such would they be genuine. If instead they issued from reflection and were assumed voluntarily,^a they would really amount to a kind of *dissemblance*, would be unguanine, and as a result their endurance and reliability under the stress of circumstances could not be counted upon at all. And even if we add the Christian virtue of love, *caritas*, which is absent in Aristotle and all the ancients, the situation is no different in its case. How is the tireless goodness of *one* human being and the incorrigible, deeply rooted wickedness^b of the other, the character of the Antonines, of Hadrian, of Titus on the one hand, and that of Caligula, Nero, Domitian on the other, supposed to have flown in from outside, and to be the work of contingent circumstances, or of mere cognition and teaching! After all, none other than Nero had Seneca as his educator. – Furthermore in the inborn character, this real core of the whole human being, lies the germ of all his virtues and vices. This conviction, so natural to the unprejudiced

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^c *Rockenphilosophie* [see note in preface to the first edition above, p. 19].

^f οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν γενέσθαι τὸ σπουδαίους εἶναι, ἢ φαύλους, κ.τ.λ. (*in arbitrio nostro positum non esse, nos probos, vel malos esse*) [1187a7. The work is also known as *Magna Moralia*, and is part of the traditional Aristotelian corpus whose attribution to Aristotle is doubted.]

^g Πᾶσι γὰρ δοκεῖ ἕκαστα τῶν ἡθῶν ὑπάρχειν φύσει πῶς· καὶ γὰρ δίκαιοι καὶ σωφρονικοὶ καὶ ἀνδρείοι καὶ τᾶλλα ἔχομεν εὐθύς ἐκ γενετῆς [1144b4] (*Singuli enim mores in omnibus hominibus quodammodo videntur inesse natura: namque ad justitiam, temperantiam, fortitudinem, ceterasque virtutes proclivitatem statim habemus, cum primum nascimur.*)

^h *de virtutibus et vitiis* [a work that is part of the traditional Aristotelian corpus, but generally agreed to be spurious]

^a *willkürlich*

^b *Bosheit* [elsewhere 'malice']

person, also guided the hand of *Velleius Paterculus* as he wrote down the following about Cato: 'A man most closely akin to virtue, and through his character closer to the gods in everything than to humans: who never did right in order to be seen doing it, but because he *could not do otherwise*.'^{c,*}

On the other hand, on the assumption of free will, it is quite simply unimaginable what virtue and vice should spring from, as is the fact that two human beings brought up identically should act quite differently and even in opposed ways in wholly identical circumstances and occasions.

55 The actual, original, fundamental difference of characters is incompatible with the assumption of such a free will, which consists in opposed actions supposedly being equally possible for each human being in every situation. For in that case his character must be a blank slate^d from the word go, like the intellect according to *Locke*, and cannot have any inborn inclination towards one side or the other – because that in itself would already remove the complete equilibrium which people think of in the *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*. So, on the assumption in question, the ground for the difference in ways of acting in different human beings that we have discussed cannot lie in the *subjective*; but even less can it lie in the *objective*: for then it would be just the objects that determine the action, and the desired freedom would be lost once and for all. At best the only remaining way out would be to locate the origin of that real and great difference of ways of acting in the middle between subject and object, that is, to have it arise from the different way in which the objective was apprehended by the subjective, i.e. the way in which it was *cognized* by different human beings. But then everything would be traced back to right or wrong *cognition* of the circumstances presented, distorting the moral difference of ways of acting into a mere difference in the rightness of judgment, and transforming morals into logic. Supposing now that the proponents of free will finally sought to rescue themselves from that serious dilemma by saying that, while there is no inborn difference of character, a difference of

* This passage is gradually becoming a regular piece of weaponry in the determinists' arsenal, an honour that the good old historian, 1800 years ago, certainly did not allow himself to dream of. First *Hobbes* praised it, after him *Priestley*. Then *Schelling* re-presented it in his essay on freedom, p. 478, in a translation somewhat falsified for his purposes; which is why he does not even refer to *Velleius Paterculus* by name, but rather, being as clever as he is refined, says 'an ancient'. Finally I too did not want to miss citing it, since it really is to the point.

^c *Homo virtuti consimilimus, et per omnia genio diis, quam hominibus propior: qui nunquam recte fecit, ut facere videretur, sed quia aliter facere non poterat* [*Ad M. Vinicium*, Book II, 35, 2: though Schopenhauer's quotation is not entirely accurate].

^d *tabula rasa*

the same kind arises from external circumstances, impressions, experiences, example, teaching etc.; and that if a character has once come about in this way, the difference in acting is subsequently explained by it – then we can reply to this, first, that in that case the character would arrive very late (whereas in fact it is already to be recognized in children); secondly, that all those external circumstances whose work the character is supposed to be are quite outside our power^a and were brought about this way or that by chance (of, if you like, by Providence), so that if character sprang from these, and the difference in acting sprang in turn from character, all moral responsibility for actions would fall away entirely, as they would plainly be the work of chance or Providence in the end. So under the assumption of free will we see the origin of the difference in ways of acting, and also of virtue or of vice together with responsibility, floating without any foothold and nowhere finding any spot to take root in. But it is apparent from this that that assumption, however much it appeals at first sight to the unrefined understanding, nonetheless stands just as fundamentally opposed to our moral convictions as it does – as has been sufficiently shown – to the highest fundamental rule of our understanding.

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The necessity with which motives, like all causes as such, have their effect – as I have thoroughly demonstrated above – is not presuppositionless. Now we have become acquainted with its presupposition, the ground and earth on which it stands: it is the inborn *individual character*. Just as every effect in lifeless nature is a necessary product of two factors, namely the universal *natural force* that here manifests itself, and the particular *cause* that here calls that manifestation forth, in the same way each deed of a human being is the necessary product of his *character* and of the *motive* that occurs. If these two are given, then it follows inevitably. In order for another deed to arise, either another motive or another character would have to be posited. And every deed would be able to be predicted with certainty, calculated even, if, for one thing, the character were not so difficult to discover and, for another, the motive were not often concealed and always exposed to the counter-effect of other motives, which reside only in the human being's sphere of thoughts, inaccessible to others. The very ends that he unchangeably strives after are already determined in essence by a human being's inborn character; the means he seizes upon towards those ends are determined partly by external circumstances, partly by his apprehension of them, whose correctness depends in turn upon his understanding and its education. Now as the final result of all this there follow

^a *Macht*

57 his particular deeds and thus the entire role that he has to play in the world. – So, captured as correctly as it is poetically, we find the outcome of the doctrine of individual character that has been presented here enunciated in one of the most beautiful verses of Goethe:

As on the day that lent you to the world
 The sun received the planets' greetings,
 At once and eternally you have thrived
 According to the law whereby you stepped forth.
 So you must be, from yourself you cannot flee,
 So have the Sibyls and the Prophets said;
 No time, no power breaks into little pieces
 The form here stamped and in life developed.^{a,33}

So the presupposition on which the necessity of the effects of all causes ultimately rests is the inner essence^b of each thing, whether that be merely a universal natural force manifesting itself in it, or whether it be life force, or whether it be will: any being,^c of whatever kind it may be, will always react in accordance with its own peculiar nature on the occasion of effective causes. This law, which all things in the world are subject to without exception, the scholastics expressed in the formula *operari sequitur esse*.^d As a consequence of this the chemist tests bodies with reagents, and one human being tests another with the trials to which he puts him. In all cases the external causes will call forth with necessity what lies within the being: for it cannot react other than in accordance with what it is.

Here we should recall that every *existentia*^e presupposes an *essentia*:^f i.e., every thing that is^g must also be *something*, have a determinate essence.^h It cannot *be there*ⁱ and at the same time be *nothing*, that is something like the *Ens metaphysicum*,^j i.e. a thing which *is*, and nothing more than *is*, without any determinations and properties, and so without the decided manner of effecting that flows from them. Rather, as an *essentia* can provide no reality without *existentia* (which Kant has explained with his well-known example of a hundred thalers^k), no more can an *existentia* do this without

^a [*Gott und Welt*, 'Urworte. Orphisch']

^b *das innere Wesen*

^c *jegliches Wesen*

^d [acting follows from being]

^e [existence]

^f [essence]

^g *jedes Seiende*

^h *Wesen*

ⁱ *daseyn*

^j [metaphysical being]

^k [See *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 599/B 627]

essentia. For³⁴ every thing that is must have a nature which is essential and peculiar to it, through which it is what it is, which it always asserts, whose manifestations are called forth with necessity by causes, while on the other hand this nature itself is in no way the work of those causes, nor modifiable by them. But all of this applies to the human being and his will just as much as to all remaining beings in nature. He too has in addition to his *existentia* an *essentia*, i.e. fundamental essential properties that make up his character and need only an occasion from outside to come forth. Consequently to expect that a human being in the presence of the same occasion would act one way at one time but quite differently another time, would be as if one expected the same tree that bore cherries this summer to bear pears in the next. Free will, precisely considered, denotes an *existentia* without *essentia*: which means that something would *be* and at the same time *be nothing*, which in turn means *not be*, and is therefore a contradiction. 58

The insight into this, and into the *a priori* certain and therefore exceptionless validity of the law of causality, is responsible for the fact that all really profound thinkers, however different their other views may have been, were in agreement in asserting the necessity of acts of will once motives occur, and in rejecting the *liberum arbitrium*. Indeed, because the incalculably great majority of those incapable of thought and the masses who are lost to illusion and prejudice stubbornly resisted this truth at all times, these thinkers carried it to the extreme so as to assert it in the most decisive, and even exaggerated expressions. The most well known of these is *Buridan's ass*, though for about a hundred years people have looked for it in vain in the writings of *Buridan* that still survive. I myself possess an edition of his *Sophismata*, apparently printed as early as the fifteenth century, without place of publication, or year, or page numbers, in which I have often looked for it in vain, although asses appear as examples on almost every page. *Bayle*, whose article *Buridan*^a is the basis of everything since written about this, is quite incorrect in saying that we know of only the *one* sophism of Buridan; for I have a whole quarto of sophismata by him. *Bayle*, given that he treats the topic so thoroughly, should also have known something that nevertheless seems not to have been remarked since then either, namely that that example, which has to a certain extent become the symbol or type of the great truth defended by me here, is far older than *Buridan*. It is found in *Dante*, who had assimilated all the knowledge of his time, lived before Buridan, and speaks not of asses but of human beings, in the following words, which open the fourth book of his *Paradise*. 59

^a [In *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (*Historical and Critical Dictionary*)]

Between two foods, distant and appetizing in equal measure, a free man would die of hunger before he would bring one of them to his teeth.^{a,*}

Indeed it is even found already in Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, II, 13, in these words: 'On the analogy of the man who though exceedingly hungry and thirsty, and both equally, yet being *equidistant* between food and drink, is therefore bound to stay where he is'.^b *Buridan*, who had taken the example from these sources, swapped his ass for the human being, simply because it is the habit of this feeble scholastic to include in his examples either Socrates and Plato, or an ass.^c

The question of free will is really a touchstone by which one can distinguish the deep thinking minds from the superficial, or a boundary stone where the two go their separate ways, the former collectively asserting the necessary consequence of an action upon given character and motive, the latter by contrast, with the great masses, supporting free will. Then there is still a middle course, which, feeling itself at a loss, zigzags to and fro, confuses the destination for itself and for others, takes refuge behind words and phrases, or twists and contorts the question for so long that one no longer knows what it amounted to. This is what Leibniz did, who was much more of a mathematician and a polyhistor than a philosopher.^{**,35}

60 But to bring such to-and-fro-speakers to the point one must pose them the question in the following way, and not deviate from it:

1) For a given human being, in given circumstances, are two actions possible or only *one*? Answer of all deep thinkers: Only one.

2) Could the life-course travelled by a given human being – considering that on the one hand his character stays unalterably fixed and on the other hand the circumstances whose influence he had to experience were necessarily determined by external causes throughout and down to the smallest detail, causes which always occur with strict necessity and whose chain, consisting of nothing but links that are just as necessary, stretches out into

* *Inter duos cibos aequae remotos unoque modo motos constitutus, homo prius fame periret, quam ut, absoluta libertate usus, unum eorum dentibus admoveat*

** Leibniz's instability on this point shows itself most clearly in his letter to Coste, *Philosophical Works*, ed. Erdmann, p. 447; and after that also in the *Theodicy*, §45–53.

^a

*Intra duo cibi, distanti e moventi
D'un modo, prima si morria di fame,
Che liber' uomo l'un recasse a' denti*

^b *De Caelo* [295b32]: καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ πεινῶντος καὶ διψῶντος σφόδρα μὲν, ὁμοίως δὲ, καὶ τῶν ἐδωδίσμων καὶ ποτῶν ἴσον ἀπέχοντος, καὶ γὰρ τοῦτον ἡρεμεῖν ἀναγκαῖον (item ea, quae de sitiente vehementer esurienteque dicuntur, cum aequae ab his, quae eduntur atque bibuntur, distat: quiescat enim necesse est).

^c *asinum*

infinity – could it turn out in any way at all, in any one occurrence, or in one scene, otherwise than it did turn out? No! is the consistent and correct answer.

The inference from both propositions is: *Everything that happens, from the greatest to the smallest, happens necessarily*. Whatever happens, necessarily happens.^{d,36}

Whoever is alarmed at these propositions still has some things to learn and others to unlearn: but after that he will recognize that they are the most abundant source of comfort and relief. – Our deeds are truly no first beginning, and so in them nothing really new attains existence:^e rather *through what we do, we merely come to experience what we are*.

On the conviction of the strict necessity of everything happening – if not clearly cognized, at least felt – rests also the view that stands so firm among the ancients, that of fate,^a destiny,^b so too the fatalism of the Mohammedans, and even the ubiquitous ineradicable belief in omens,^c because even the smallest accident occurs necessarily and all incidents keep in time with one another, so to speak, so that everything has an echo in everything. Finally, it is also connected with this that someone who has maimed or killed another without the slightest intention and quite accidentally, laments this sin^d his whole life long with a feeling that seems related to guilt, and also experiences from others a peculiar kind of discredit as a person of sin (unfortunate human being).^e And the felt conviction of the unalterability of character and the necessity of its manifestations is not without its influence even on the Christian doctrine of predestination.^f – Finally, I do not wish to suppress the following wholly incidental observation here, which everyone may take or leave, depending how he thinks about certain things. If we do not assume the strict necessity of all happening by way of a causal chain that links all events without distinction, and instead let it be interrupted in countless places by an absolute freedom, then all *foreseeing of the future*, in dreams, in clairvoyant somnambulism, and in second sight^{g,37} becomes quite *objectively* and thus absolutely *impossible*, and so unthinkable – because then there is simply no objectively real future

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^d *Quidquid fit necessario fit*

^e *zum Daseyn gelangt*

^a *Fatum*

^b *εἰμαρμενῇ*

^c *Omina*

^d *Piaculum*

^e *persona piacularis* (Unglücksmensch)

^f *Gnadenwahl*

^g *im zweiten Gesicht* (second sight)

with the barest possibility of being foreseen, in contrast with the present situation where we doubt merely its *subjective* conditions and hence its *subjective* possibility. And even this doubt can no longer be accommodated among the well-informed these days, now that countless testimonies, from the most credible quarters, have confirmed such anticipations of the future.

I shall add a couple more considerations as corollaries of the confirmed doctrine of the necessity of all happening.

What would become of the world if necessity did not permeate all things and hold them together, and in particular did not preside over the procreation of individuals? A monstrosity,^a a heap of rubble, a grimace^b without sense or meaning – in other words, the work of true and genuine accident. –

62 Wishing that some incident had not happened is a foolish self-torment: for it means wishing something absolutely impossible, and is as irrational as the wish that the sun should rise in the West. Because every happening, great or small, occurs *strictly* necessarily, it is totally vain to reflect on how trivial and accidental were the causes that brought about that incident and how very easily they could have been different. For this is illusory, in that they all occurred with just as strict a necessity and had their effect with just as much power as those in consequence of which the sun rises in the East. Rather we ought to regard events as they occur with the same eye as the print that we read, knowing full well that it stood there before we read it.³⁸

^a *Monstrum*

^b *Fratze*

IV PREDECESSORS

63

In corroboration of the above assertion about the judgment of all deep thinkers with regard to our problem, I wish to recall some of the great men who have pronounced in this manner.

First of all, in order to placate those who could perhaps believe that religious grounds stand in opposition to the truth defended by me, I recall that Jeremiah (10, 23) already said 'The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.' But I appeal in particular to Luther,³⁹ who in a book written expressly for the purpose, *On the Bondage of the Will*,^a disputes free will with all of his vehemence. A couple of passages from it are sufficient to characterize his opinion, which he naturally supports not with philosophical, but with religious grounds. I cite them according to the edition of Seb. Schmidt, Strasburg 1707. – In that volume, p. 145, it says: 'Hence we find it inscribed in the hearts of all that the free will is nothing, although this conviction is obscured by so many contrary assertions and the authority of so many men.' – p. 214: 'Here I should like to admonish those who defend free will that with the assertion of free will they deny Christ.' – p. 220: 'All testimonies of Scripture are in conflict with free will, to the extent that they speak of Christ. But these are countless, indeed the whole of Scripture. So if we make Scripture the judge in the matter, I will prevail in every respect, for not one jot or tittle remains over that does not condemn the doctrine of free will.'^b –

64

Now to the philosophers. The ancients are not seriously to be taken into account here, since their philosophy, still, as it were, in the state of innocence, had not yet brought the two deepest and most troubling problems of modern philosophy to clear consciousness, namely the question of the freedom of the will and that of the reality of the external world, or the relation of the ideal to the real. Still, we can see reasonably well how far the problem of the freedom of the will had become clear to the ancients from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, III, ch. 1–8, where we will find that his thinking on this issue concerns in essence merely physical and intellectual

^a *De servo arbitrio*

^b Dasselbst S. 145 heißt es: *Quare simul in omnium cordibus scriptum invenitur liberum arbitrium nihil esse; licet obscuretur tot disputationibus contrariis et tanta tot virorum auctoritate.* – S. 214: *Hoc loco admonitos velim liberi arbitrii tutores, ut sciant, sese esse abnegatores Christi, dum asserunt liberum arbitrium.* – S. 220: *Contra liberum arbitrium pugnabant Scripturae testimonia, quotquot de Christo loquuntur. At ea sunt innumerabilia, imo tota Scriptura. Ideo, si Scriptura iudice causam agimus, omnibus modis vicero, ut ne jota unum aut apex sit reliquus, qui non damnet dogma liberi arbitrii* [*De servo arbitrio*, Sections XCIV, CLVII, CLXIII]

freedom, which is why he constantly speaks only of voluntary and involuntary,^c taking voluntary and free as one and the same. The much more difficult problem of *moral freedom* has not yet occurred to him, although occasionally his thoughts do in fact stretch that far, especially *Nicomachean Ethics*, II, 2 and III, 7, where, however, he falls into the mistake of deriving character from deeds instead of the other way round. In the same way he quite falsely criticizes the conviction of Socrates that I adduced earlier; but in other places he has made it into his own, e.g. *Nicom.* X, 10: ‘The contribution of nature clearly is not up to us, but results from some divine cause in those who have it, who are the truly fortunate ones.’ – Shortly afterwards: ‘Hence we must already in some way have a character suitable for virtue, fond of what is fine and objecting to what is shameful’^a – which agrees with the passage cited by me above, and also with *Ethica Magna*, I, 11: ‘For he who chooses to be best will not be so, unless nature also be presupposed: better, however, he will be.’^b Aristotle treats the question of free will in the same manner in *Ethica Magna*, I, 9–18, and *Eudemian Ethics*, II, 6–10, where he comes somewhat nearer to the real problem; yet everything is unstable and superficial. His method everywhere is not to go into matters directly, proceeding analytically, but rather, synthetically, to draw conclusions from external marks; instead of penetrating so as to reach the core of things, he sticks with external signs, even with words.⁴⁰ This method often leads astray, and in deeper problems never leads to the goal. So here he comes to a stop before the supposed opposition between the necessary and the voluntary,^c as before a wall: but only beyond this lies the insight that the voluntary precisely *as such* is *necessary*, because of the motive, without which the act of will is no more possible than without a willing subject, and that the motive is a cause just as well as the mechanical cause from which it is different only in essentials. He even says so himself (*Eudemian Ethics*, II, 10): ‘the object of an action is one of the causes’.^d

^c ἔκουσιον και ἀκουσιον

^a τὸ μὲν οὖν τῆς φύσεως δῆλον ὡς οὐκ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν ὑπάρχει, ἀλλὰ διὰ τινος θείας αἰτίας τοῖς ὡς ἀληθῶς εὐτυχέσιν ὑπάρχει [1179b21] (*quod igitur a natura tribuitur, id in nostra potestate non esse, sed, ab aliqua divina causa profectum, inesse in iis, qui revera sunt fortunati, perspicuum est*). – *Mox*: Δεῖ δὴ τὸ ἥθος προϋπάρχειν πῶς οἰκεῖον τῆς ἀρετῆς, στέργον τὸ καλὸν και δυσχεραῖνον το αἰσχροῦν [1179b29] (*Mores igitur ante quodammodo insint oportet, ad virtutem accommodati, qui honestum amplectantur, turpitudineque offendantur*)

^b Οὐκ ἔσται ὁ προαιρούμενος εἶναι σπουδαιότατος, ἂν μὴ και ἡ φύσις ὑπάρξῃ, βελτίων μέντοι ἔσται [1187b28] (*non enim ut quisque voluerit, erit omnium optimus, nisi etiam natura exstiterit: melior quidem recte erit*)

^c ἀναγκαιον και ἔκουσιον

^d ἡ γὰρ οὐ ἕνεκα μία τῶν αἰτιῶν ἔστιν [1226b26] (*nam id, cujus gratia, una e causarum numero est*)

And so that opposition between the voluntary and the necessary is a fundamentally false one, although even today many alleged philosophers are in just the same position as Aristotle.⁴¹

Cicero already presents the problem of free will reasonably clearly in the book *On Fate*,^e ch. 10 and ch. 17. The subject of his treatise certainly leads very easily and naturally in that direction. He himself adheres to free will; but we see that Chrysippus and Diodorus must already have brought the problem more or less clearly to consciousness. – Also worthy of attention is the thirtieth dialogue of the dead by *Lucian*, between Minos and Sostratos, which denies free will and along with it responsibility.

But to a certain extent the fourth book of Macabees in the Septuagint (not present in Luther^f) is already a treatise on free will, in so far as it sets about the task of bringing a proof that reason (reasoning^g) possesses the power to overcome all passions and affects, and corroborates this with the Jewish martyrs in the second book.⁴²

The oldest clear recognition of our problem known to me is apparent 66 in *Clement of Alexandria* (*Stromata* I, §17) where he says: ‘Neither praise nor vituperation, nor honours, nor punishments are just, if the soul does not have the capacity for striving and resisting, but vice is involuntary’.^h – then, after an intervening sentence relating to something said earlier: ‘so that God is absolutely not to blame for our vice’.^a This highly noteworthy addition shows in what sense the Church grasped the problem straight away, and what decision it immediately anticipated in accord with its own interests. – Almost 200 years later we find the doctrine of free will already treated thoroughly by *Nemesius*, in his work *On the Nature of Man*,^b at the end of chapter 35, and chapters 39–41. Here freedom of the will is identified without further ado with voluntariness,^c or choice,^d and is consequently asserted and demonstrated with the greatest zeal. Still, for all that it is a ventilation of the issue.⁴³

^e *de fato*

^f [Luther’s version of the Bible]

^g λογισμος

^h οὐτε δε οἱ ἐπαινοί, οὐτε οἱ φοβοί, οὐδ’ αἱ τιμαί, οὐδ’ αἱ κολασεῖς, δίκαιαι, μη τῆς ψυχῆς ἐξουσίας τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῆς ὀρμῆς καὶ ἀφορμῆς, ἀλλ, ἀκουσίου τῆς κακίας οὐσίας [*Stromata*, ch. 17, §83] (*nec laudes, nec vituperationes, nec honores, nec supplicia justa sunt, si anima non habeat liberam potestatem et appetendi et abstinendi, sed sit vitium involuntarium*)

^a ἰν’ ὅτι μάλιστα ὁ Θεὸς μὲν ἡμῖν κακίας ἀναιτίος [§84] (*ut vel maxime quidem Deus nobis non sit causa vitii*)

^b *De natura hominis*

^c Willkür

^d Wahlentscheidung

But we find the fully developed consciousness of our problem with everything that attaches to it first in the Church Father *Augustine*, who thus comes into consideration here, despite being much more of a theologian than a philosopher. Right away, however, we see him get into considerable embarrassment and uncertain vacillation over this, which leads him into inconsistencies and contradictions, in his three books *On the Free Choice of the Will*.^c On the one hand he does not want, like *Pelagius*, to accommodate free will to the extent that original sin, the necessity for redemption,^f and free Providence^g would be removed in the process, so that the human being could become just and worthy of bliss^h through his own powers. In the argument concerning *On the Free Choice of the Will* in his *Retractions*, book 1, ch. 9,ⁱ he even gives us to understand that he would have said more on this side of the controversy (which Luther so vehemently defended later), if those books of his had not been written before the appearance of *Pelagius*, against whose position he then composed the book *On Nature and Grace*.^j Meanwhile he says in *On the Free Choice of the Will*, III, 18: 'Now, however, a human being is not good, and does not have it in his power to be good, whether he does not see how he ought to be, or whether he sees it and does not will to be as he sees he ought to be.' Shortly afterwards: 'Either through ignorance he will not have the free will to choose what he rightly should do; or through the habit of the flesh, which has increased somehow naturally through the power of mortal sin, he will see what should rightly be done and will it, but not be able to carry it out';^k and in the aforementioned argument:^l 'Therefore, unless by the grace of God the will itself is liberated from the servitude by which it is made the servant of sin and assisted in overcoming vice, it is not possible for mortals to live rightly and piously.'^m

Yet on the other hand the following three reasons moved him to defend freedom of the will:

^c *de libero arbitrio*

^f *Erlösung*

^g *Gnadenwahl*

^h *Saligkeit*

ⁱ *in dem Argumento in libros de lib. arb. ex Lib. I, c. 9 Retractionum desumpto*

^j *de natura et gratia*

^k *Nunc autem homo non est bonus, nec habet in potestate, ut bonus sit, sive non videndo qualis esse debeat, sive videndo et non volendo esse, qualem debere esse se videt [§51] – Mox: vel ignorando non habet liberum arbitrium voluntatis ad eligendum quid recte faciat; vel resistente carnali consuetudine, quae violentia mortalis successionis quodammodo naturaliter inolevit, videat quid recte faciendum sit et velit, nec possit implere [ibid.]*

^l *im erwähnten Argumento*

^m *Voluntas ergo ipsa, nisi gratia Dei liberatur a servitute, qua facta est serva peccati, et, ut vitia superet, adjuvetur, recte, pieque vivi non potest a mortalibus*

1) His opposition to the *Manicheans*, against whom the books *On the Free Choice of the Will* are expressly directed, because they denied free will and assumed another source of wickedness and of evil.^a He is already dealing with them in the last chapter of the book *On the Grandeur of the Soul*:^b ‘free will is given to the soul, and those who try to shake it with trifling reasonings, are so blind that . . . etc.’^c

2) The natural deception, uncovered by me, by which the ‘I can do what I will’ is taken for freedom of the will and ‘voluntary’ is immediately taken as identical with ‘free’: *On the Free Choice of the Will* I, 12: ‘For what lies in the power of the will so much as the will itself?’^d

3) The necessity of bringing the moral responsibility of the human being into harmony with the justice of God. For there is an extremely serious worry^e that did not escape Augustine’s acumen, one so difficult to deal with that, as far as I know, all later philosophers, with the exception of three⁴⁴ whom we shall shortly consider more closely, have preferred to creep delicately and quietly around it, as if it were not there. Augustine, by contrast, speaks it out with noble openness, quite uncomplicatedly, in the very opening words of the books *On the Free Choice of the Will*: ‘Tell me, I pray you, whether God is not the author of evil?’^f – And then at greater length directly in the second chapter: ‘But this question moves my mind: if sins come from the souls that God has created, and the souls come from God; how is it that the sins are not, by a small interval, referred back to God?’^g To this the interlocutor responds: ‘Now you have said precisely what torments me considerably in my thoughts.’^h – It was this highly troubling investigation that *Luther* took up again and emphasized with the full vehemence of his eloquence, in *On the Bondage of the Will*, p. 144: ‘But that God must be such as to subject us, through his *freedom*, to *necessity*, is something that natural reason itself must confess. . . . If one concedes prescience and omnipotence, it follows naturally and incontrovertibly that we are not made by ourselves, nor live, nor do anything, but by his omnipotence. . . . The prescience and omnipotence of God conflicts

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^a des Bösen, wie des Uebels

^b de animae quantitate

^c datum est animae liberum arbitrium, quod qui nugatoriis ratiocinationibus labefactare conantur, usque adeo coeci sunt, ut . . . caet

^d Quid enim tam in voluntate, quam ipsa voluntas, situm est? [see §26]

^e Bedenklichkeit

^f Dic mihi, quaeso, utrum Deus non sit auctor mali? [I, ch. 1, §1]

^g Movet autem animum, si peccata ex his animabus sunt, quas Deus creavit, illae autem animae ex Deo; quomodo non, parvo intervallo, peccata referantur in Deum [ch. 2, §4]

^h Id nunc plane abs te dictum est, quod me cogitantem satis excruciat [ibid., §5]

diametrically with our free will. . . . All human beings are compelled with inevitable consequence to acknowledge that we do not become what we are by our own will, but by necessity; and thus that we cannot do what we like, by virtue of a free will, but rather in accordance with what God has foreseen and what he *does* through his infallible and immutable counsel and virtue':ⁱ etc.

At the beginning of the 17th Century we find *Vanini* completely filled with this knowledge.^j It is the core and the soul of his persistent opposition to theism – though under pressure of the age it is concealed as cunningly as possible. He comes back to it at every opportunity, and does not tire of presenting it from the most diverse points of view. E.g. in his *Amphitheatre of Eternal Providence*,^a *exercitatio* 16, he says: 'If God wills sins, then he will make them happen, for it is written: "everything that he wills, he does". If he does not will them and yet they are committed, then he must be pronounced either lacking in foresight, or impotent, or cruel; since then he fails to carry out his decision through either ignorance, or lack of power, or negligence. . . . The philosophers say: if God did not will that terrible and nefarious actions should occur in the world, then without doubt he would banish all transgressions out of the world with a single nod and destroy them: for who among us can resist the divine power? How can crimes against God's will come to pass, if in every sinful act he provides the sinner with the power to do it? Furthermore, if someone goes astray contrary to the will of God, then God is weaker than the human being who opposes and prevails over him. From this they deduce that God wills the world to be as it is: if he willed a better one, he would have a better one.'^b – And

ⁱ *At talem oportere esse Deum, qui libertate sua necessitatem imponat nobis, ipsa ratio naturalis cogitur confiteri. – Concessa praescientia et omnipotentia, sequitur naturaliter, irrefragabili consequentia, nos per nos ipsos non esse factos, nec vivere, nec agere quidquam, sed per illius omnipotentiam. – Pugnatur ex diametro praescientia et omnipotentia Dei cum nostro libero arbitrio. – Omnes homines coguntur inevitabili consequentia admittere, nos non fieri nostra voluntate, sed necessitate; ita nos non facere quod libet, pro jure liberi arbitrii, sed prout Deus praescivit et agit consilio et virtuti infallibili et immutabili* [see sects. XCIII–XCIV. Schopenhauer refers to the edition of Schmidt (1707)].

^j *Erkenntniß*

^a *Amphitheatro aeternae providentiae*

^b *Si Deus vult peccata, igitur facit: scriptum est enim "omnia quaecunque voluit fecit". Si non vult, tamen committuntur: erit ergo dicendus improvidus, vel impotens, vel crudelis; cum voti sui compos fieri aut nesciat, aut nequeat, aut negligat. — — — Philosophi inquiunt: si nollet Deus pessimas ac nefarias in orbe vigere actiones, procul dubio uno nutu extra mundi limites omnia flagitia exterminaret, profligaretque: quis enim nostrum divinae potest resistere voluntati? Quomodo invito Deo patrantur scelera, si in actu quoque peccandi scelestis vires subministrat? Ad haec, si contra Dei voluntatem homo labitur, Deus erit inferior homine, qui ei adversatur, et praevalet. Hinc deducunt: Deus ita desiderat hunc mundum, qualis est: si meliorem vellet, meliorem haberet.*

in *exercitatio* 44 we read: ‘The instrument moves as it is directed by its owner; but our will in its operations behaves as an instrument, while God behaves as the proper agent: therefore if the will operates badly, it is to be imputed to God. . . . Our will depends totally on God not solely with regard to its movements, but with regard to its substance as well: so there is nothing that could truly be imputed to it, either from the side of its substance, or that of its operations, but everything must be imputed to God, who formed the will in this way and thus set it in motion. . . . Since the essence and the movement of the will come from God, the good and the bad operations of the will must be ascribed to him, if the will relates to him as an instrument.’^c But with *Vanini* one must keep in mind that all the way through he employs the stratagem of setting up his real opinion, in the person of an opponent, as the one he detests and wants to refute, and of presenting it thoroughly and convincingly – only to oppose it, in his own person, with shallow reasons and lame arguments and then depart in triumph, as if he had put things right,^d relying on the malignity of his reader. By means of this archness he even deceived the highly educated Sorbonne, who, taking it all at face value, placed their imprimatur on the front of his most godless writings with a sincere heart. With an even heartier joy they saw him three years later being burned alive, after his god-profaning tongue had first been cut out. For this is the really powerful argument of theologians, and once it is taken from them, things regress greatly.⁴⁵

Unless I am mistaken, among philosophers in the narrower sense,⁴⁶ *Hume* is the first who did not creep around the serious worry initially raised by Augustine, but instead – though without thinking of Augustine, or Luther, let alone *Vanini*⁴⁷ – presented it unconcealed, in his *Essay on liberty and necessity*, where towards the end it says: ‘The ultimate author of all our volitions is the creator of the world, who first bestowed motion on this immense machine, and placed all beings in the particular position, whence every subsequent event, by an inevitable necessity, must result. Human actions therefore either can have not turpitude at all, as proceeding from so good a cause, or, if they have any turpitude, they must involve *our creator* in the same guilt, while he is acknowledged to be their ultimate cause and author. For as a man, who fired a mine, is answerable for the

^c *Instrumentum movetur prout a suo principali dirigitur: sed nostra voluntas in suis operationibus se habet tanquam instrumentum, Deus vero ut agens principale: ergo si haec male operatur, Deo imputandum est. — — — Voluntas nostra non solum quoad motum, sed quoad substantium quoque tota a Deo dependet: quare nihil est, quod eidem imputari vere possit, neque ex parte substantiae, neque operationis, sed totum Deo, qui voluntatem sic formavit, et ita movet. — — — Cum essentia et motus voluntatis sit a Deo, adscribi eidem debent vel bonae, vel malae voluntatis operationes, si haec ad illum se habet velut instrumentum.*

^d *tanquam re bene gesta*

consequences, whether the train employed be long or short; so wherever a continued chain of necessary causes is fixed, that Being, either finite or infinite, who produces the first, is likewise the author of all the rest.’* He makes the attempt to dissolve this worry, but in the end admits that he regards it as irresolvable.

Even *Kant*, independently of his predecessors, meets the same stumbling block in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, pp. 180ff. in the fourth edition, and p. 232 in Rosenkranz’s:^a ‘It nevertheless seems that, as soon as one admits that God as universal original being is the *cause* also of *the existence of substance*, one must admit that a human being’s actions have their determining ground in something altogether beyond his control, namely in the causality of a supreme being which is distinct from him and upon which his own existence and the entire determination of his causality absolutely depend. . . . A human being would be a marionette or an automaton, like Vaucanson’s, built and wound up by the supreme artist; self-consciousness
71 would indeed make him a thinking automaton, but the consciousness of his own spontaneity, if taken for freedom, would be a mere delusion inasmuch as it deserves to be called freedom only comparatively, because the proximate determining causes of its motion and a long series of their determining causes are indeed internal but the last and highest is found entirely in an alien hand.’ – He then seeks to remove this great worry through the distinction between thing in itself and appearance: but it is so obvious that through this distinction nothing in the essence of the matter is altered, that I am convinced he was not at all serious about it. He himself even admits the inadequacy of his solution, on p. 184,^b where he adds: ‘But is any other solution that has been attempted, or that may be attempted, easier and more apprehensible? One might rather say that the dogmatic teachers of metaphysics have shown more *shrewdness* than sincerity in keeping this difficult point out of sight as much as possible, in the hope that if they said nothing about it no one would be likely to think of it.’

After this highly noteworthy compilation of heterogeneous voices that all say the same, I return to our Church Father. The grounds on which he hopes to put aside the worry, whose weight he already felt in full,

* A translation of this and other English passages will be welcomed by some German readers: [Schopenhauer gives such translations of his own in footnotes here and throughout the remainder of the chapter]

^a [Ak. 5: 100–1]

^b [Ak. 5: 103]

are theological, not philosophical, and so not of unconditional validity. Support of these grounds is, as we have said, the third reason, in addition to the two introduced above, why he seeks to defend a *liberum arbitrium* granted to human beings by God. Since it would be positioned in the middle as a division between the creator and the sins of his creature, such a thing would really be sufficient to put the whole worry aside – if only, as well as being easy to say in words and perhaps satisfying for thought that goes not much further than words, it remained at least *thinkable* in serious and more profound consideration. But how can we succeed in imagining that a being that is the work of another in his whole existence^a and essence^b could nonetheless determine himself as a primitive beginning^c and from the ground up, and hence be responsible for what he does? The principle *Operari sequitur esse*,^d i.e. the effects of any being follow from its constitution, overturns that assumption, but cannot itself be overturned. If a human being acts badly, then it comes from his *being* bad. But to that principle attaches its corollary: *ergo unde esse, inde operari*.^e What would we say of a watchmaker who got angry with his watch because it went incorrectly? If anyone would like – with whatever degree of readiness – to make the will into a blank slate,^f he will not be able to avoid admitting that if one of two human beings pursues a way of acting quite opposed to that of the other as regards morality, then this difference, which must after all spring from somewhere, has its ground either in external circumstances, in which case the blame^g obviously does not attach to the human beings, or in an original difference of their will as such, in which case again the blame and credit does not attach to them, if their whole being and essence is the work of another. Since the great men I have mentioned have striven in vain to find a way out of this labyrinth, I willingly admit that thinking of the moral responsibility of the human will without its aseity^h exceeds my power of comprehension as well. It was without doubt the same incapacity that dictated the seventh of the eight definitions with which Spinoza opens his *Ethics*: ‘That thing is called free, which exists solely by the necessity of its own nature, and of which the action is determined by itself alone. On the other hand, that thing is necessary, or rather constrained, which

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^a *Existentia*^b *Essentia*^c *uranfänglich*^d [acting follows from being]^e [Therefore the acting comes from where the being comes from]^f *tabula rasa*^g *Schuld*^h *Aseität* [absolute independence of other things]

is determined by something external to itself to a fixed and determinate method of existence or action.^{3a}

73 For if a bad action springs from the nature, i.e. the inborn constitution, of a human being, then the blame obviously resides with the originator of this nature. That is why free will was invented. But then, with that assumed, what the action is supposed to have sprung from cannot be understood at all – because the free will is fundamentally a merely *negative* property and signifies only that nothing necessitates, or hinders, the human being's acting thus or so. But in this way it never becomes clear *what* in the end the action springs from, since it is not supposed to arise from the inborn or acquired constitution of the human being, as it would then become a burden to his creator, nor from external circumstances alone, as then it would be attributable to accident; so the human being would remain blameless either way – while in fact he is made responsible for it. The natural image of a free will is an unweighted balance: it hangs there calmly, and will never come out of equilibrium unless something is placed in one of its scales. Just as it can produce no movement out of itself, no more can the free will produce an action out of itself; because indeed nothing comes out of nothing. If the balance is to sink to one side, a foreign body must be placed on it, which is then the source of the *movement*. In the same way human action must be brought about by something that has positive effect and is something more than a merely *negative* freedom. But this can only be in two ways: either the motives do it in and of themselves, i.e. the external circumstances – then obviously the human being is not responsible for the action, and in addition all human beings would have to act quite identically under identical circumstances; or it springs from his receptivity for such motives, and so from the inborn character, i.e. from the inclinations originally dwelling in the human being, which can be different in individuals and through whose power the motives have their effect. But then the will is no longer a free one: for these inclinations are the weight placed in the scales of the balance. Responsibility falls back upon the one who placed them there, i.e. the one whose work the human being with such inclinations is. So it is only in the case in which he himself is his own work, i.e. has aseity, that he is responsible for his doings.

The view of the matter presented here allows us to gauge everything that hangs upon freedom of the will, which forms an irredeemable chasm between the creator and the sins of his creature – from which it becomes

^a *ea res libera dicitur, quae ex sola naturae suae necessitate existit, et a se sola ad agendum determinatur; necessaria autem, vel potius coacta, quae ab alio determinatur ad existendum et operandum*

intelligible why the theologians hold to it so persistently, and their shield bearers, the philosophy professors, with the highest sense of duty^b support them so zealously over this that, blind to the most conclusive counter-proofs of great thinkers, they hold to free will and fight for it as if for hearth and altar.^{a, 48}

But finally to close my report on *Augustine* that was interrupted above: overall his opinion is that human beings really had a totally free will only before the Fall, but that after it, once original sin had come to pass, they have to hope for their salvation from Providence and redemption^b – which is spoken like a Church Father.

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Meanwhile through *Augustine* and his dispute with Manicheans and Pelagians philosophy awoke into consciousness of our problem. From now on it gradually became clear to philosophy, through the scholastics, what *Buridan's* sophisma and the above-quoted passage of *Dante* bore testimony to. – But the person who first got to the bottom of the matter is, to all appearances, Thomas Hobbes, whose piece specifically dedicated to this subject, *Questions concerning liberty and necessity, against Doctor Branhall*,^c appeared in 1656. It is now rare. It can be found in English in *Th. Hobbes moral and political works*, one volume in folio, London 1750, pp. 469ff., from where I quote the following key passage. p. 483:

'6) Nothing takes a beginning from itself; but from the action of some other immediate agent, without itself. Therefore, when first a man has an appetite or will to something, to which immediately before he had no appetite nor will; the cause of his will is not the will itself, but something else not in his own disposing. So that, whereas it is out of controversy, that of voluntary actions the will is the necessary cause, and by this which is said, the will is also necessarily *caused* by other things, whereof it disposes not, it follows that voluntary actions have all of them necessary causes, and therefore are *necessitated*.

'7) I hold *that* to be a *sufficient* cause, to which nothing is wanting that is needfull to the producing of the *effect*. The same is also a *necessary* cause: for, if it be possible that a *sufficient* cause shall not bring forth the *effect*, then there wanteth somewhat, which was needfull to the producing of it; and so the cause was not *sufficient*. But if it be impossible that a *sufficient* cause should not produce the effect; then is a *sufficient* cause a *necessary* cause. Hence it is manifest, that whatever is produced, is produced *necessarily*.

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^b pflichtschuldigst

^a pro ara et fociis

^b von der Gnadenwahl und Erlösung sein Heil zu hoffen habe

^c Quaestiones de libertate et necessitate, contra Doctorem Branhallum

For whatsoever is produced has had a *sufficient* cause to produce it, or else it had not been: and therefore also *voluntary* actions are *necessitated*.

'8) That ordinary definition of a free agent (namely that a free agent is that, which, when all things are present, which are needfull to produce the effect, can nevertheless not produce it) implies a contradiction and is Nonsense; being as much as to say, the cause may be *sufficient*, that is to say *necessary*, and yet the effect shall not follow. . . .

[p. 485:] 'Every accident, how contingent soever it seem, or how *voluntary* soever it be, is produced *necessarily*.'

76 In his famous book, *The Citizen*,^a ch. 1, §7, he says: 'Everyone is driven to desire what is good for him, and to avoid what is bad for him, but most of all the greatest of natural evils, which is death. And this happens with a certain necessity of nature that is no less than that by which the stone falls downwards.'^b

Straight after *Hobbes* we see *Spinoza* pervaded by the same conviction. A couple of passages will suffice to characterize his doctrine on this point:

Ethics, Part I, prop. 32: 'Will cannot be called a free cause, but only a necessary cause.'— Corollary 2: 'For will, like the rest, stands in need of a cause, by which it is conditioned to exist and act in a particular manner.'^c

Ibid., Part II, last scholium: 'As for the fourth objection (of Buridan's ass),^d I am quite ready to admit, that a man placed in the equilibrium described (namely, as perceiving nothing but hunger and thirst, a certain food and a certain drink, each equally distant from him) would die of hunger and thirst.'^e

Ibid., Part III, prop. 2, scholium: 'These decisions of the mind arise in the mind by the same necessity, as the ideas of things actually existing. Therefore those who believe, that they speak or keep silence or act in any way from the free decision of their mind, do but dream with their eyes open.'^f Letter 62: 'Every thing is necessarily determined by external

^a *De Cive*

^b *Fertur unusquisque ad appetitionem ejus, quod sibi bonum, et ad fugam ejus, quod sibi malum est, maxime autem maximi malorum naturalium, quae est mors; idque necessitate quadam naturae non minore, quam qua fertur lapis deorsum*

^c *Voluntas non potest vocari causa libera, sed tantum necessaria. — Coroll. 2: Nam voluntas, ut reliqua omnia, causa indiget, a qua ad operandum certo modo determinatur* [Translations from *Spinoza's Ethics* are based on those by R. H. M. Elwes (Dover, 1955).]

^d [Schopenhauer's parenthetical insertion]

^e *Quod denique ad quartam objectionem (de Buridani asina) attinet, dico, me omnino concedere, quod homo in tali aequilibrio positus (nempe qui nihil aliud percipit quam sitim et famem, talem cibum ad talem potum, qui aequae ab eo distant) fame et siti peribit*

^f *Mentis decreta eadem necessitate in mente oriuntur, ac ideae rerum actu existentium. Qui igitur credunt, se ex libero mentis decreto loqui vel tacere, vel quidquam agere, oculis apertis somniant*

causes to exist and operate in a given determinate manner. For instance, a stone receives from the impulsion of an external cause, a certain quantity of motion, by virtue of which it continues to move after the impulsion given by the external cause has ceased. Further conceive that a stone, while continuing in motion, should be capable of thinking and knowing, that it is endeavouring, as far as it can, to continue to move. Such a stone, being conscious merely of its own endeavour and not at all indifferent, would believe itself to be completely free, and would think that it continued in motion solely because of its own wish. This is that human freedom, which all boast they possess, and which consists solely in the fact, that men are conscious of their own desire, but are ignorant of the causes whereby that desire has been determined. . . . I have thus sufficiently explained my opinion regarding free and constrained necessity, and also regarding so-called human freedom.^g

It is, however, a noteworthy circumstance that *Spinoza* arrived at this insight only in his final years (i.e. his forties), while earlier, in the year 1665, when he was still a Cartesian, he had defended the opposing opinion in decisive and lively fashion in his *Metaphysical Thoughts*,^a ch. 12, and, in direct contradiction of the last scholium of Part II just quoted, had even said the following with regard to Buridan's sophisma: 'If we placed a human being instead of an ass in the same equilibrium, and he died of hunger and thirst, we should have to regard him not as a thinking thing, but as the basest of asses.'^b

Below I shall come to report on the same alteration in opinion and the same conversion in the case of two other great men. This proves how difficult and profound the correct insight into our problem is.

Hume, in his *Essay on liberty and necessity*, from which I already had a passage to include above, writes with the plainest conviction of the necessity of individual acts of will upon given motives, and in his widely accessible manner expresses it extremely clearly. He says: 'Thus it appears that the conjunction between motives and voluntary actions is as regular

^g *Unaquaeque res necessario a causa externa aliqua determinatur ad existendum et operandum certa ac determinata ratione. Ex. gr. lapis a causa externa, ipsum impellente, certam motus quantitatem accipit, qua postea moveri necessario perget. Concipe jam lapidem, dum moveri pergit, cogitare et scire, se, quantum potest, conari, ut moveri pergat. Hic sane lapis, quandoquidem sui tantummodo conatus est conscius et minime indifferens, se liberrimum esse et nulla alia de causa in motu perseverare credet, quam quia vult. Atque haec humana illa libertas est, quam omnes habere jactant, et quae in hoc solo consistit, quod homines sui appetitus sint conscii, et causarum, a quibus determinantur, ignari. — His, quae nam mea de libera et coacta necessitate, deque ficta humana libertate sit sententia, satis explicui*

^a *Cogitata metaphysica*

^b *Si enim hominem loco asinae ponamus in tali aequilibrio positum, homo, non pro re cogitante, sed pro turpissimo asino erit habendus, si fame et siti pereat*

and uniform as that between the cause and effect in any part of nature.' And further on: 'It seems almost impossible, therefore, to engage either in science or action of any kind, without acknowledging the doctrine of necessity and this inference from motives to voluntary actions, from character to conduct.'

78 But no writer has presented the necessity of acts of will so thoroughly and convincingly as *Priestley*, in his work exclusively dedicated to this subject, *The Doctrine of philosophical necessity*. If anyone is not convinced by this supremely clearly and accessibly written book, his understanding must really be paralysed by prejudices. To characterize his results I set out a few passages which I cite from the second edition, Birmingham 1782.

Preface, p. XX: 'There is no absurdity more glaring to my understanding, than the notion of philosophical liberty.' – p. 26: 'Without a miracle, or the intervention of some foreign cause, no volition or action of any man could have been otherwise, than it has been.' – p. 37: 'Though an inclination or affection of the mind be not gravity, it influences me and acts upon me as certainly and necessarily, as this power does upon a stone.' – p. 43: 'Saying that the will is *self-determined*, gives no idea at all, or rather implies an absurdity, viz: that a *determination*, which is an *effect*, takes place, without any cause at all. For exclusive of every thing that comes under the denomination of *motive*, there is really nothing at all left, to produce the determination. Let a man use what *words* he pleases, he can have no more *conception* how we can sometimes be determined by motives, and sometimes without any motive, than he can have of a scale being sometimes weighed down by weights, and sometimes by a kind of substance that has no weight at all, which, whatever it be in itself, must, with respect to the scale be *nothing*.' – p. 66: 'In proper philosophical language, the motive ought to be call'd the *proper cause* of the action. It is as much so as any thing in nature is the cause of any thing else.' – p. 84: 'It will never be in our power to choose two things, when all the previous circumstances are the very same.' – p. 90: 'A man indeed, when he reproaches himself for any particular action in his passed conduct, may fancy that, if he was in the same situation again, he would have acted differently. But this is a mere *deception*; and if he examines himself strictly, and takes in all circumstances, he may be satisfied that, with the same inward disposition of mind, and with precisely the same view of things, that he had then, and exclusive of all others, that he has acquired by reflection *since*, he could not have acted otherwise than he did.' – p. 287: 'In short, there is no choice in the case, but of the doctrine of necessity or absolute nonsense.' –

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Now it is to be remarked that the same happened to *Priestley* as to *Spinoza* and to another very great man about to be mentioned. For *Priestley* says in the Preface to the first edition, p. XXVII: 'I was not however a ready convert to the doctrine of necessity. Like Dr. Hartley himself, I gave up my liberty with great reluctance, and in a long correspondence, which I once 80 had on the subject, I maintained very strenuously the doctrine of liberty, and did not at all yield to the arguments then proposed to me.'

The third great man to whom the same thing happened is *Voltaire*,⁴⁹ who reports it with his very own charm and naivety. In his *Treatise on Metaphysics*,^a ch. 7, he had defended so-called free will at length and in lively fashion. But in his book *The philosopher without knowledge*,^b written more than forty years later, he teaches the strict necessitation of acts of will in the thirteenth chapter, which he ends in this way: 'Archimedes is equally necessitated to remain in his room when one shuts him in it and when he is so greatly occupied with a problem that the idea of going out does not occur to him:

'The fates lead the willing, the unwilling they drag.

'The person with no knowledge who thinks thus has not always thought the same, but in the end he was compelled to surrender.'^c In the following book, *The principle of action*,^d he says in chapter 13: 'a ball that strikes another, a dog that chases necessarily and voluntarily after a stag, this stag that jumps a large ditch with no less necessity and will: all of this is no more irresistibly determined than we are to everything that we do.'^e

This consistent conversion of three such highly eminent minds to our view must surely give pause for thought to anyone who undertakes to dispute well grounded truths with the 'but I can after all do what I will' of his simple self-consciousness, which does not address the topic at all.

Following these immediate predecessors of his we should not be surprised that *Kant* took the necessity with which the empirical character is determined to actions by motives as a matter already settled in his own work as much as in that of others, and did not waste time proving 81

^a *Traité de métaphysique*

^b *Le philosophe ignorant*

^c Archimède est également nécessité de rester dans sa chambre, quand on l'y enferme, et quand il est si fortement occupé d'un problème, qu'il ne reçoit pas l'idée de sortir:

Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt [Seneca, *Epistles*, 107, 11]

L'ignorant qui pense ainsi n'a pas toujours pensé de même, mais il est enfin contraint de se rendre.

^d *Le principe d'action*

^e Une boule, qui en pousse une autre, un chien de chasse, qui court nécessairement et volontairement après un cerf, ce cerf, qui franchit un fossé immense avec non moins de nécessité et de volonté: tout cela n'est pas plus invinciblement déterminé que nous le sommes à tout ce que nous faisons

it over again. He begins his 'Ideas towards a universal history' like this: 'Whatever conception of the *freedom of the will* one may form in terms of metaphysics, its *appearances*, human actions, are nonetheless determined according to universal natural laws, as is every other natural event.' – In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (p. 548 of the first edition, or p. 577 of the fifth^a) he says: 'Because the empirical character itself must be drawn from appearances as effect, and from the rule which experience provides, all the actions of the human being in appearance are determined in accord with the order of nature by his empirical character and the other cooperating causes; and if we could investigate all the appearances of his power of choice down to their basis, then there would be no human action that we could not predict with certainty, and recognize as necessary given its preceding conditions. Thus in regard to this empirical character there is no freedom, and according to this character we can consider the human being solely by *observing*, and, as happens in anthropology, by trying to investigate the moving causes of his actions physiologically.' – In the same book, p. 798 of the first edition, or p. 826 of the fifth,^b it says: 'The will may well be free, yet this can concern only the intelligible cause of our willing. For, in accordance with an inviolable fundamental maxim without which we could not exercise any reason in empirical use, we must explain the phenomena of its manifestations, i.e. actions, no differently than all other appearances of nature, namely in accordance with its unalterable laws.' – Then in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 177 of the fourth edition, or p. 230 of Rosenkranz's:^c

82 'One can therefore grant that if it were possible for us to have such deep insight into a human being's cast of mind, as shown by inner as well as outer actions, that we would know every incentive to action, even the smallest, as well as all the external occasions affecting them, we could calculate a human being's conduct for the future with as much certainty as a lunar or solar eclipse.'

But he attaches to this his doctrine of the co-existence^d of freedom and necessity, by way of the distinction of the intelligible character from the empirical, a view that I shall return to below, since I fully believe in it. Kant expounded it twice, namely in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 532–554 of the first edition, or pp. 560–582 of the fifth, and even more clearly in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, pp. 169–179 of the fourth edition, pp. 224–231

^a [In fact see A549–50/B577–8]

^b [Where Schopenhauer's references to the first and fifth editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* correspond with the customary A and B marginal references, these are not separately annotated]

^c [Ak. 5: 99]

^d *Zusammenbestehen*

in Rosenkranz's.^a These passages of exceedingly profound thought must be read by anyone who wants to gain a fundamental knowledge of the compatibility^b of human freedom with the necessity of actions.

So far the present essay on this subject is distinguished from the achievements of all these noble and honourable predecessors chiefly on two points: firstly, guided by the prize question, I have strictly separated inner perception of the will in self-consciousness from outer, and considered each of them in its own right, which means that it has become possible for the very first time to reveal the source of the deception that works so irresistibly on so many human beings. Secondly, I have brought the will into consideration in connection with the whole of the rest of nature, which nobody before me has done, and which means that for the very first time the subject could be treated with the thoroughness, methodical insight and completeness of which it is capable.

Now a few more words on some writers who have written after Kant, but whom I do not regard as my predecessors.

An elucidatory paraphrase of the highly important doctrine of Kant's that we have just praised, concerning the intelligible and empirical character, has been provided by *Schelling*, in his 'Investigation into human freedom', pp. 465–471.^c Because of the liveliness of its colour this paraphrase can serve 83 for many to make the issue easier to grasp than could the thorough but dry Kantian presentation. Meanwhile I ought not to mention this without making the charge – in honour of truth and of *Kant* – that here, when he is expounding one of the most important and admirable, and indeed, in my estimation, the most profoundly significant of all Kantian doctrines, *Schelling* does not clearly state that what he is currently presenting, as far as its content is concerned, belongs to *Kant*; and in addition expresses himself in such a way that the great majority of readers, for whom the content of the great man's wide-ranging and difficult works is not precisely to hand, must suppose they are here reading *Schelling's* own thoughts. To what extent the consequence has matched the intent here, I will show through only *one* piece of evidence out of many. Even in the present day a young professor of philosophy at Halle, Mr. Erdmann, says in his book of 1837 entitled *Body and Soul*,^d p. 101: 'Although Leibniz, similarly to Schelling in his essay on freedom, has the soul determining itself prior to all time' etc.

^a [Ak. 5: 94–100]

^b *Vereinbarkeit*

^c *Untersuchung über die menschliche Freiheit* [*Untersuchungen über die menschliche Freiheit*, in *Philosophical Works* (1809), vol. 1]

^d *Leib und Seele*

So here *Schelling* stands to *Kant* in the fortunate position of *Amerigo* to *Columbus*: someone else's discovery is stamped with his name. But for this he also has to thank his own cleverness and not accident. For he starts off, p. 465: 'It was *idealism* that first of all raised the doctrine of freedom into that region' etc., and now the Kantian thoughts follow immediately. Thus instead of saying *Kant* here, in accordance with honesty, he craftily says *idealism*: yet here anyone will understand by this ambiguous expression *Fichte's* philosophy and *Schelling's* first, Fichtean philosophy rather than *Kant's* doctrine, seeing that the latter had protested against the naming of his philosophy as *idealism* (e.g. *Prolegomena*, p. 51, p. 155 Rosenkranz^a)⁵⁰ and even added a 'Refutation of idealism' to the second edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 274. Then on the following page *Schelling* very craftily mentions the 'Kantian concept' in a passing phrase, just so as to appease those who already know that it is Kantian riches that are here being turned out with such pomp as his own wares. But then again on p. 472 it is said that *Kant* had *not* raised himself to this view in his theory, etc. – while from the two immortal passages of *Kant* that I recommended reading above anyone can clearly see that precisely this view belongs originally to him alone, a view that a thousand more heads such as those of Messrs. *Fichte* and *Schelling* would never have been capable of comprehending without him. Since I had to speak here of *Schelling's* essay, I was obliged not to stay silent on this point, but have simply fulfilled my duty to that great teacher of mankind, who quite alone alongside *Goethe* is justly the pride of the German nation, by restoring to him what belongs incontrovertibly to him alone – and this in an age to which *Goethe's* saying genuinely applies: 'The boys are masters of the course.'^b – Incidentally, in the same essay *Schelling* showed the same lack of decency in adopting the thoughts and even the words of *Jacob Böhme* as his own without disclosing his source.⁵¹

Apart from this paraphrase of Kantian thoughts those 'Investigations concerning freedom' contain nothing that could serve to furnish us with new or fundamental enlightenment about freedom. This is already apparent right at the beginning in the definition: freedom is to be 'a capacity for good and evil'.^c Such a definition might do for the catechism: but in philosophy nothing is said by this, and so nothing is begun either. For good and evil are far removed from being simple concepts (*notiones simplices*) that are clear in themselves and stand in need of no explaining, establishing or grounding. Really only a small part of that essay deals with freedom: instead its chief

^a [Ak. 4: 293]

^b *Das Knabenvolk ist Herr der Bahn* [Parabolisch, no. 7, line 8]

^c *ein Vermögen des Guten und Bösen*

content is an extensive report on a god with whom the esteemed author^d betrays an intimate acquaintance, since he even describes his coming into existence; it is only to be regretted that he does not mention in a single word how he came to this acquaintance. The beginning of the essay is made up of a web of sophisms whose shallowness anyone will recognize who does not let himself be cowed by the presumptuousness of the tone.

Since then, and in consequence of this and similar products, 'intellectual intuition'^e and 'absolute thought'^f have taken the place of clear concepts and honest investigation in German philosophy: impressing, flabbergasting, mystifying, throwing sand in the reader's eyes through all manner of tricks has become the method, and in place of insight intent^a governs the discourse. Because of all this, philosophy, if you still want to call it that, had to sink more and more and ever deeper, until in the end it reached the deepest level of debasement in the minister-creature^b *Hegel*:⁵² in order to stifle once again the freedom of thinking achieved by *Kant*, this man made philosophy, the daughter of reason and mother-to-be of truth, from then onwards into a tool of the State's purposes,⁵³ of obscurantism and protestant Jesuitry; but so as to conceal the disgrace and at the same time bring about the greatest possible stupefaction of people's heads, he drew over it the covering mantle of the hollowest word-mongering and the most senseless gibberish^c that has ever been heard, at least outside the madhouse.

In England and France philosophy, taken as whole, still stands almost where *Locke* and *Condillac* left it. *Maine de Biran*, who is called by his editor, Mr. *Cousin*, 'the first French metaphysician of my time',^d is in his *New considerations of physics and morals*,^e which appeared in 1834, a fanatical believer in the *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*, and takes it as a matter that is entirely self-evident. Many of the recent German philosophical scribblers do the same:⁵⁴ the *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*, under the name of 'moral freedom',^f appears in their writings as a settled matter, just as if all the great men discussed above had never existed. They explain freedom of the will as given immediately in self-consciousness and established so unshakeably by that that all arguments against it can be nothing other than sophisms. This elevated confidence arises solely from the fact that the

^d der Herr Verfasser

^e intellektuale Anschauung

^f absolutes Denken

^a statt der Einsicht die Absicht

^b Minister-Kreatur

^c Gallimathias

^d le premier métaphysicien Français de mon temps

^e Nouvelles considérations du physique et moral

^f sittliche Freiheit

86 good people do not know at all what freedom of the will is and signifies, but instead in their innocence understand by it nothing other than that mastery^g of the will over the limbs of the body which we analysed in our second chapter, something that no rational human being has ever doubted and whose expression is just that 'I can do what I will'. This, they believe in all honesty, is freedom of the will, and are confident of the fact that it is elevated above all doubt. It is precisely the state of innocence that, after so many great predecessors, Hegelian philosophy has regressed the German thinking mind^h into.⁵⁵ We could indeed call out to people of this cast:

Are you not like women who return
and yet again return to their first word,
though we reason with them for hours?ⁱ

However, in some of them the theological motives touched on above might be effective on the quiet.⁵⁶

And then again the medical, zoological, historical, political and belle-lettristic writers of our days – how extremely keen they are to seize every opportunity to mention 'human freedom', 'moral freedom'! With that they think they are something.⁵⁷ Admittedly they do not venture an explanation of it: but if one were allowed to examine them, one would find that they are thinking either of nothing at all, or of our old, honest, familiar *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*, whatever noble manners of speech they may dress it up in – a concept, then, whose untenability we will never succeed in convincing the great masses of, but which the learned should guard themselves against speaking about with so much innocence. There are even a few desperate ones among them who are very entertaining, because they no longer dare to talk of freedom of the *will*, but rather, to make it refined, say 'freedom of the *spirit*' instead, and hope to slip through by doing so. What they are thinking here I fortunately know how to tell the reader who is looking at me questioningly: Nothing, absolutely nothing at all – seeing that, in line with good German custom and practice, it is an undecided expression, and in fact one that really says nothing, which provides them with the desired cover for their vacuity and laziness, so that they can escape. The word *Geist*, 'spirit', properly a metaphorical^a expression, everywhere designates the *intellectual* abilities in contrast to the will: but these ought in no way to be free in the way they work, but should fit, accommodate and be subject first to the rules of logic and then to the

^g *Herrschaft*

^h *Geist*

ⁱ [Schiller, *Wallenstein's Tod* (*Wallenstein's Death*), II, 3]

^a *tropisch*

respective *object* of their cognition, and it should never be that 'the will stands in place of reason'.^b In all, this 'spirit' that gets around everywhere in today's German literature is a thoroughly suspect companion, which one should therefore ask for its passport wherever it is encountered. Its most frequent profession is serving as a mask for a poverty of thought combined with cowardice. Anyway, it is well known that the word *Geist* is related to the word *Gas*, which, originating from the Arabic and alchemy, means mist or air, as also do *spiritus*, πνευμα, *animus*, related to ἀνεμος.^{c, 58}

Thus things stand as has been stated with regard to our theme, in the philosophical world and in the wider world of learning, after everything that the great minds we have cited have taught about it;⁵⁹ which yet again goes to prove not only that in all ages nature has produced but a very few real thinkers, as rare exceptions, but also that these few themselves were always there only for a very few. So it is that delusion and error continually assert their mastery. –

On a moral subject the testimony of the great poets also carries weight. They do not speak on the basis of systematic investigation, but human nature lies open before their profound gaze: and so their utterances hit upon the truth immediately. – In *Shakespeare, Measure for Measure*, act. 2, scene 2, Isabella begs the vice-regent Angelo for mercy upon her brother who is condemned to death:

Angelo. I will not do it.

Isab. But can you if you would?

Ang. Look, what I *will* not, that I *cannot* do.

In *Twelfth Night*, act I, we have:

Fate show thy force, ourselves we do not owe,
What is decree'd must be, and be this so.⁶⁰

Walter Scott too, that great knower and painter of the human heart and its most secret stirrings, brought that deep-lying truth clearly to light in his *St. Ronan's Well*, vol. 3, ch. 6. He portrays a dying woman who is a repentant sinner, seeking on her deathbed to alleviate her tormented conscience through confessions, and in the middle of them he has her say:

Go, and leave me to my fate; I am the most detestable wretch, that ever liv'd, – detestable to myself, worst of all; because even in my penitence there is a secret whisper that tells me, that were I as I have been, I would again act over all the wickedness I have done, and much worse. Oh! for Heavens assistance, to crush the wicked thought!⁶¹

^b *stat pro ratione voluntas* [Cf. Juvenal, *Satires*, VI, 223: *sit pro ratione voluntas*]

^c [spirit, breath, mind, wind]

A corroboration of *this* poetic portrayal is provided by the following factual case that is parallel to it, and that at the same time confirms the doctrine of the constancy of character in the strongest manner. It was reported in 1845 from the French newspaper *La Presse* in the *Times* of 2 July 1845, from where I translate it. The headline runs: Military Execution in Oran. 'On the 24th of March a Spaniard named Aguilar, *alias* Gomez, was condemned to death. On the day before the execution he said in conversation with the gaoler: "I am not as guilty as I have been represented: I am accused of having committed 30 murders, whilst I have committed but 26. I had a thirst for blood from my infancy. At the age of 7 years and a half I stabbed a child. I murdered a pregnant woman, and at a later period I murdered a Spanish officer, in consequence of which I was compelled to fly from Spain. I took refuge in France, where I committed two crimes before
 89 I enlisted in the Foreign Legion. Of all my crimes, I regret the following more than all the others: in 1841, I captured, at the head of my company, a deputy commissary-general, escorted by a sergeant, a corporal and 7 men: I caused them all to be decapitated. Their death is a weight over me: I frequently see them in my dreams, and tomorrow I shall see them in the soldiers who are ordered to shoot me. *And, nevertheless, were I to recover liberty, I would murder others.*"^a

The following passage from Goethe's *Iphigenia* (Act 4, Scene 2) also belongs here:

Arcas. For you have not heeded sincere advice.
Iphigenia. What I could do, I gladly did.
Arcas. It still is not too late to change your mind.
Iphigenia. Never is this within our power.⁶²

A famous passage in Schiller's *Wallenstein* also expresses our fundamental truth:

Know that man's deeds and thoughts
 Are not like the blind play of ocean waves.
 The inner world, his microcosm, is
 The deep shaft from which they spring eternally.
Necessary they are, like the fruit of the tree,
 Juggling chance can change them not.
 When first I have searched man's heart,
 Then do I know his willing and his acts.^a

^a [Based on the text of the original *Times* article, in which, however, the individual's name is Aguilara.]

^a [*Wallensteins Tod*, III, 3, end]

V CONCLUSION AND HIGHER VIEWPOINT

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I have been happy to recall to memory here all those glorious predecessors, both poetic and philosophical, in the truth that I have defended. Meanwhile it is not authorities but grounds that are the philosopher's weapon; hence I have conducted my case with the latter alone, and yet I hope to have given them such an evidentness that I am now quite justified in drawing the inference *a non posse ad non esse*,^a and in this way the negative answer given above to the question set by the Royal Society upon investigation of self-consciousness – a direct, factual answer that was therefore grounded *a posteriori* – is now also grounded mediately and *a priori*, since something that is present in no way at all cannot have data from which it might prove itself in self-consciousness either.

Now even if the truth defended here should be one of those that may oppose the preconceived opinions of the short-sighted and even be objectionable to the weak and unknowing, this ought not to have held me back from expounding it without digression and without restraint, seeing that I am here speaking not to the people, but to an enlightened academy, which set its very timely question not in order to fortify prejudice, but to honour truth. – Furthermore, as long as it is still a matter of discovering a truth and establishing its credentials, the honest truth-seeker^b will always attend solely to its grounds and not to its consequences, for which there will be time later when it is established. To examine the grounds alone, unconcerned about the consequences, and not to ask beforehand whether or not a truth we have cognized is also in harmony with our remaining convictions – this is recommended already by *Kant*, whose words I cannot refrain from repeating here: 'This strengthens the maxim already cognized and praised by others: in every scientific investigation to pursue one's way with all possible exactness and candour, to pay no heed to offence that might be given outside its field but, as far as one can, to carry it through truly and completely by itself. Frequent observation has convinced me that when such an undertaking has been carried through to its end, that which, halfway through it, seemed to me at times very dubious in view of other, extraneous doctrines was at the end found to harmonize perfectly, in an unexpected way, with what had been discovered independently, without the least regard for those doctrines and without any partiality or prejudice for them, provided I left this dubiousness out of sight for a while and attended only to the business at hand until I had brought it to completion.

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^a [from not being possible to not being]

^b *Wahrheitsforscher*

Writers would save themselves many errors and much labour lost (because spent on a delusion) if they could only resolve to go to work with somewhat more candour.' (*Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 190 of the fourth edition, p. 239 of Rosenkranz's.^a)

92 Our metaphysical cognitions^b in general are, however, still heavens away from having such certainty that one should reject any thoroughly proven truth because its consequences do not fit with them. Moreover every truth that is attained and established is a conquered part of the overall region of problems of knowledge^c and a fixed point for situating the levers which will move other loads, indeed a point from where, in favourable cases, one rises aloft all at once to a higher view of the whole than one has had before. For the concatenation of truths in every region of knowledge is so great that anyone who has placed himself in secure possession of a single one certainly has the right to hope that, starting from there, he will conquer the whole. Just as in a difficult algebraic task a single positively given quantity is of inestimable worth because it makes the solution possible, so in the most difficult of all human tasks, which is metaphysics, secure cognition, proven *a priori* and *a posteriori*, of the strict necessity with which deeds follow from given character and given motives, is just such an inestimable datum, in that by departing from it alone one can arrive at the solution of the complete task. Therefore everything that does not have firm, scientific credentials to produce must yield to such a well founded truth where it stands in its way, but not the other way round; and such a truth should by no means acquiesce in accommodations and restrictions in order to make itself in harmony with unproven and perhaps erroneous claims.

Here let me make one more general remark. A look back at our result gives us occasion to consider that in respect of the two problems which in the preceding chapter were designated the most profound in the philosophy of the moderns, yet not clearly known to the ancients – namely, the problem of free will and that of the relation between the ideal and the real – the healthy but unrefined understanding is not only incompetent, but even has a decided natural tendency to error, and requires a philosophy that has already flourished extensively to recall it from that error. For in respect of *cognition* it is really natural for it to assign much too much to the *object*, which is why *Locke* and *Kant* were needed to show how very much of it arises from the *subject*. In respect of *willing*, by contrast, it has the opposite tendency to attribute much too little to the *object* and much too much

^a [Ak. 5: 106]

^b *Kenntnisse*

^c *des Wissens*

to the *subject*, making it issue entirely from *the latter*, without bringing properly into consideration the factor that lies in the *object*, the motives that genuinely determine the whole individual constitution of actions, while only what is general and essential in them, namely their fundamental moral character, issues from the *subject*. Still, that this sort of wrongness in speculative investigations is natural to the understanding ought not to surprise us; for the understanding is originally determined solely for practical ends and in no way for speculative ones. — ⁶³ 93

If in consequence of our presentation so far we have entirely removed all freedom of human action and recognized it as thoroughly subordinate to the strictest necessity, we have now been led in that very process to the point where we will be able to grasp *true moral freedom*, which is of a higher kind.

For there is one more fact of consciousness that I have entirely neglected so far, so as not to disturb the progress of the investigation. This is the wholly clear and sure feeling of *responsibility* for what we do, of *accountability* for our actions, which rests on the unshakeable certainty that we ourselves are *the doers of our deeds*. Because of this consciousness it never occurs to anyone — not even one who is wholly convinced of the necessity with which our actions occur as expounded above — to exculpate himself for a transgression by way of this necessity and to shift the blame from himself to the motives on the grounds that once they occurred the deed was inevitable. For he sees very well that this necessity has a *subjective* condition and that objectively,^a i.e. in the present circumstances, and so under the influence of the motives that determined him, quite another action, indeed the action directly opposed to his own, was after all entirely possible and could have happened, *if only he had been another*: this alone is what it depended on. *For him*, because he is this one and not another, because he has such and such a character, no other action was indeed possible; but in itself, and thus objectively, it was possible. So the *responsibility* he is conscious of relates only provisionally and ostensibly to the deed, but fundamentally to *his character*: it is for *this* that he feels himself responsible. And it is for *this* that others hold him responsible, as their judgment forsakes the deed at once in order to discover the qualities of the doer: 'he is a bad human being, a villain' — or 'he is a rogue' — or 'he is a low, false, mean soul' — that is how their judgment sounds, and their reproaches go back to his *character*. 94

The deed, along with the motive, comes into consideration merely as evidence of the character of the doer, but counts as a sure symptom of

^a *objective*

it, by which it is discovered irrevocably and forever. So Aristotle says with complete correctness: 'we bestow encomiums upon someone who has done something. Yet the actual deeds are evidence of the doer's character: even if a man has not actually done a given good thing, we shall bestow praise on him, if we are sure that he is the sort of man who would do it.' – *Rhetoric* I, 9.^a Thus⁶⁴ hate, disgust and contempt are flung not at the passing deed, but at the constant properties of the doer, i.e. of the character from which they have come forth. This is why in all languages the epithets of moral badness, the abusive names, are predicates more of the *human being* than of actions. They are attached to the *character*: for the latter has to bear the guilt of which it has merely been convicted on the occasion of the deeds.

Where *guilt* lies, there must *responsibility* lie also: and since the latter is the sole datum from which the conclusion to moral freedom is justified, *freedom* must also lie in the very same place, that is in the *character* of the human being – all the more so, as we have sufficiently convinced ourselves that it is not to be encountered immediately in individual actions, whose occurrence, given the presupposition of the character, is strictly necessitated. But the character, as was shown in the third chapter, is inborn and unalterable.

Let us now give closer consideration to freedom in this sense then, the only one for which data are available, so that, once we have disclosed it from a fact of consciousness and located it, we may also grasp it philosophically, so far as that might be possible.⁶⁵

95 In the third chapter I had stated that every action of a human being is the product of two factors: his character with the motive. This in no way means that it is a middle thing, a compromise, as it were, between the motive and the character. Rather, it gives full satisfaction to both, in that it rests for its whole possibility on both simultaneously, that is, on the effective motive's suiting this character and this character's being determinable by such a motive. The character is the empirically cognized, enduring and unalterable constitution of an individual will. And since this character is as necessary a factor in every action as the motive, this is what explains the feeling that our deeds issue from us ourselves, or that '*I will*' which accompanies all our actions, and because of which each one must recognize them as *his* deeds, for which he therefore feels himself morally responsible. This once again is just that '*I will, and always will only what I will*' that we found above in investigating self-consciousness – which misleads the

^a Ἐγκωμιάζομεν πράξαντας· τὰ δ' ἔργα σημεῖα τῆς ἕξεώς ἐστι, ἔπειτα πτανοῖμεν ἂν καὶ μὴ πεπραγότα, εἰ πιστεύοιμεν εἶναι τοιοῦτον. *Rhetorica*, I, 9 [1367b31] (*Encomio celebramus eos, qui egerunt: opera autem signa habitus sunt; quoniam laudaremus etiam qui non egisset, si crederemus esse talem.*)

unrefined understanding into stubbornly asserting an absolute freedom of doing and refraining, a *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*. But it is nothing more than the consciousness of the second factor of the action, which by itself alone would be quite unable to bring it forth, and on the other hand, once the motive arrives, is just as unable to refrain from it. But only once it is put into action in this way does it reveal its own constitution to the faculty of cognition, which, directed essentially towards the outside and not the inside, first becomes acquainted with even the constitution of its own will only empirically from its actions. This closer acquaintance, growing ever more intimate, is properly what we call *conscience*, which for that reason is voiced^a *directly* only *after* the action, *prior* to it at most only *indirectly*, when it is brought into the picture in deliberation as something occurring in the future, perhaps by way of reflection and retrospection upon similar cases over which it has already made itself clear.

Here is the place to recall the exposition, mentioned already in the previous chapter, that Kant gave of the relationship between empirical and intelligible character, and thereby of the compatibility of freedom with necessity, which belongs among the most beautiful and most profoundly thought products of this great mind, and indeed of human beings ever. I have only to refer to it, since it would be a redundant long-windedness to repeat it here. But from this alone it may be grasped, to the extent that human powers are capable of it, how the strict necessity of our actions nonetheless co-exists with that freedom of which the feeling of responsibility provides evidence, and by means of which we are the doers of our deeds and they are morally attributable to us. – That relationship between empirical and intelligible characters expounded by Kant rests wholly and completely on what constitutes the fundamental feature of his entire philosophy, namely the distinction between appearance and thing in itself: and just as for him the perfect *empirical reality* of the world of experience is compatible with its *transcendental ideality*, in just the same way the strict *empirical necessity* of acting is compatible with its *transcendental freedom*. For as an object of experience the empirical character is, like the whole human being, a mere appearance, and so bound to the forms of all appearance, time, space and causality, and subordinate to their laws; by contrast, that which as thing in itself is independent of these forms and so subordinate to no time distinction, and is therefore the enduring and unalterable condition and foundation of this whole appearance, is his *intelligible character*, i.e. his will as thing in itself,⁶⁶ to which, in this capacity,

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^a laut wird

there certainly also pertains absolute freedom, i.e. independence from the law of causality (as a mere form of appearances). This freedom is, however, *transcendental*, i.e. not occurring in appearance, but present only in so far as we abstract from appearance and all its forms, so as to reach that which, outside all time, is to be thought as the inner essence of the human being in himself. By way of this freedom all deeds of the human being are his own work, however necessarily they issue from the empirical character upon its coincidence with motives – because this empirical character is merely the appearance of the intelligible character in our *faculty of cognition*, which is bound to time, space and causality, i.e. it is the mode and manner in which the essence in itself of our own self presents itself to the faculty of cognition. Consequently the *will* is indeed free, but only in itself and outside of appearance: within the latter, by contrast, it presents itself with a determinate character, with which all its deeds must be in accordance, and so, when more closely determined by the motives that arrive, must necessarily come out *thus* and not otherwise.

This way leads, as is easy to see, to the point that we have to seek the work of our *freedom* no longer in our individual actions, as the common view does, but in the whole being and essence (*existentia et essentia*) of the human being himself, which must be thought of as a free deed that merely presents itself for the faculty of cognition, linked to time, space and causality, in a plurality and diversity of actions – actions which nonetheless, precisely because of the original unity of what presents itself in them, must all bear exactly the same character and so appear as strictly necessitated by the motives by which they are called forth and individually determined on each occasion. Consequently, *operari sequitur esse*^a stands firm without exception for the world of experience. Each thing operates^b in accordance with its constitution, and its operation consequent upon causes reveals this constitution. Each human being acts according to how he is, and the corresponding necessary action on each occasion will be determined, in the individual case, solely by motives. Thus *freedom*, which cannot be encounterable in the *operari*,^c must reside in the *esse*.^d In all ages it has been a fundamental error, a putting of things backwards,^e to assign *necessity* to the *esse* and *freedom* to the *operari*. Quite the reverse, *freedom resides in the esse alone*; but from it and the motives the *operari* follows with

^a [acting follows from being]

^b *wirkt*

^c [acting]

^d [being]

^e *ein ὕστερον προτερον*

necessity: and *in what we do, we come to know what we are*. On this, and not on the alleged *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*, rests the consciousness of responsibility and the moral tendency of life. It all depends on what someone *is*; what he *does* will emerge from this by itself as a necessary corollary. So the consciousness of their independence^f and originality^g that undeniably accompanies all our deeds in spite of their dependence upon motives, and because of which they are *our* deeds, does not deceive: but its true content reaches further than the deeds and begins higher above, as in truth our being and essence itself from which all deeds issue necessarily (on the occasion of motives) is also comprehended within it. In this sense the consciousness of independence and originality, and that of responsibility too, that accompanies our actions can be compared with a signpost that points to a more distant object than the one lying nearer in the same direction that it appears to point to. 98

In one word: a human being does at all times only what he wills, and yet does it necessarily. But that rests on the fact that he *is* what he *wills*: for out of what he *is* everything that he does at any time follows necessarily. If we consider his doing objectively,^a that is from outside, then we recognize apodictically that it must, like the action^b of every natural being, be subordinate to the law of causality in its total strictness; subjectively,^c by contrast, everyone feels that he only ever does what he *wills*. This, however, signifies merely that his action^d is the pure expression of his own intrinsic being.^e Hence every natural being, even the lowliest, would feel the same if it could feel.

Thus *freedom* is not removed by my presentation, but merely pushed out, that is out of the realm of individual actions where it is demonstrably not to be encountered, up into a higher region which is yet not so easily accessible for our cognition: i.e. it is transcendental. And this is also the sense in which I would like Malebranche's saying *la liberté est un mystère*^f to be understood, under whose aegis the present essay has sought to complete the task set by the Royal Society.

^f *Eigenmächtigkeit*

^g *Ursprünglichkeit*

^a *objective*

^b *Wirken*

^c *subjective*

^d *Wirken*

^e *seines selbsteigenen Wesens*

^f [Freedom is a mystery: the motto for the essay, which Schopenhauer here wrongly attributes to Malebranche]

Appendix, to supplement the first chapter

In consequence of the division of freedom into physical, intellectual and moral set out right at the beginning, now that the first and the last have been dealt with I still have to discuss the second, which is to happen merely for the sake of completeness and therefore briefly.

99 The intellect, or the faculty of cognition, is the *medium of motives*, that through which they have effect on the will, which is the genuine core of the human being. It is only in so far as this medium of motives is in a normal condition, fulfilling its functions correctly, and so presenting the motives unfalsified as they lie ready in the real external world, to the will for it to choose,^a that the will can decide in accordance with its nature, i.e. the individual character of the human being, and hence express itself *unhindered*, according to its own intrinsic essence. Then the human being is *intellectually free*, i.e. his actions are the pure result of the reaction of his will to motives that lie ready in the external world for him just as for all others. Consequently his actions are then imputable to him morally and also juridically.

This intellectual freedom is *removed* either by the medium of motives, the faculty of cognition, being continuously or merely temporarily deranged, or by external circumstances falsifying the apprehension of motives in the individual case. The former is the case in madness, delirium, paroxysm and somnolence, the latter in a clear cut and blameless error, e.g. when one pours out poison instead of medicine, or takes one's servant coming in at night for a robber and shoots him, and the like. For in both cases the motives are falsified, which means that the will cannot make its decision as it would under the present circumstances if the intellect transmitted them to it correctly. Crimes committed in such circumstances are therefore also not punishable in law. For laws proceed from the correct assumption that the will is not morally free, in which case one would not be able to *steer* it, but that it is subject to necessitation by motives. In line with this, laws seek to place in opposition to all possible motives for crime strong counter-motives in the form of threatened punishments, and a criminal code is nothing other than a catalogue of counter-motives to criminal actions.⁶⁷ But if it turns out that the intellect through which these counter-motives were supposed to have their effect was incapable of apprehending them and holding them before the will, then their having an effect was impossible, they were not available for it. It is as when we find that one of the strings

^a zur Wahl

that were supposed to move a machine has snapped. So in such a case the blame transfers from the will to the intellect: but the latter is not subject to any punishment; rather, laws, like morals, have to do only with the will. It alone is the genuine human being: the intellect is merely its organ, its external antennae, i.e. the medium of effects upon it from motives.

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Deeds of this kind are no more *morally* imputable. For they are no feature of the character of a human being: he either did something other than he imagined he was doing, or was incapable of thinking of that which should have restrained him from it, i.e. of admitting the counter-motives. It is similar to when a substance that is to be investigated chemically is exposed to several reagents in order to see which it has the strongest affinity with: if it is found after the experiment has been made that one reagent could not have had any effect at all because of an accidental hindrance, then the experiment is invalid.

Intellectual freedom, which we are here considering as totally removed, can in addition be merely *diminished*, or partially removed. This occurs especially through affect and through intoxication. *Affect* is the sudden, powerful arousal of the will by a representation that invades from outside and becomes a motive, and that has such liveliness that it dims all the others that could have had a contrary effect on it as counter-motives, and does not allow them to come clearly into consciousness. These last representations – which are mostly only of an abstract nature, mere thoughts, whereas the former is something intuitive, of the present – do not, as it were, get a shot and so do not have what in English is called *fair play*: the deed already happened before they were able to counteract. It is as in a duel when one person shoots before the word of command. Here too both juridical and moral responsibility are accordingly removed, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the nature of the circumstances, but still always removed in part. In England a murder committed in total haste and without the slightest deliberation, in the most powerful, suddenly aroused anger is called *manslaughter* and punished lightly and sometimes even not at all. – *Intoxication* is a state which disposes us towards affects, in that it heightens the liveliness of intuitive representations and conversely weakens thinking in the abstract,^a and intensifies the energy of the will in the process. The place of responsibility for the deeds is here taken by responsibility for the intoxication itself: hence it is not free from blame juridically, although intellectual freedom is here partly removed.

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^a in abstracto

Aristotle already speaks of this intellectual freedom, 'the voluntary and involuntary with respect to thought', albeit very briefly and unsatisfactorily, in *Eudemian Ethics* II, chs. 7 and 9, and somewhat more fully in *Nicomachean Ethics* III, ch. 2.^b – It is what is meant when forensic medicine^a and criminal justice ask whether a criminal was in a state of freedom and consequently accountable.

In general then all those crimes are to be regarded as committed in the absence of intellectual freedom where the human being either did not know what he was doing, or was completely incapable of weighing up what ought to have restrained him from it, namely the consequences of the deed. In such cases he is consequently not to be punished.

Those, on the other hand, who hold that, just because of the non-existence of *moral* freedom and the consequent inevitability of all actions of a given human being, no criminal should be punished, start from the wrong view of punishment – that it is a visitation of crimes for their own sake, a repayment of evil with evil, on moral grounds. Such a thing, even though Kant taught it, would be absurd, pointless and completely unjustified. For how would one human being be empowered to set himself up as absolute judge of the other and as such to torment him for the sake of his sins! Rather the law, i.e. the threat of punishment, has the aim of being the counter-motive to the crime that has not yet been committed. If it fails to have this effect in an individual case, it must be implemented, because otherwise it would fail to have it in all future cases. For his part the criminal really does undergo the punishment in this case in consequence of his moral constitution that inevitably brought about the deed in conjunction with the circumstances, which were the motives and his intellect that reflected before him the hope of evading punishment. An injustice could happen to him here only if his moral character were not his own work, his intelligible deed, but the work of another. The same relation of the deed to its consequence takes place if the consequences of his vicious doings occur not through human laws but through laws of nature, e.g. if excesses of debauchery bring about frightful illnesses, or if while attempting a break-in he comes to a bad end accidentally, e.g. if in the pig-sty he breaks into at night to abduct its usual occupant, he instead finds the bear whose trainer stopped at this inn in the evening, advancing towards him with open arms.⁶⁸

^b τὸ ἐκούσιον καὶ ἀκούσιον κατὰ διάνοιαν [see *Eud. Eth.* 1223a23–5; *Nic. Eth.* III of.]

^a *Medicina forensis*

Prize essay on the basis of morals
not awarded a prize
by the Royal Danish Society of Sciences
at Copenhagen, on 30 January 1840

Motto:

Moral predigen ist leicht, Moral begründen schwer

[Preaching morals is easy, grounding morals hard:
Schopenhauer, *On the Will in Nature*]

The question set by the Royal Society, together with the introduction that prefaces it, runs as follows:

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Quum primitiva moralitatis idea, sive de summa lege morali principalis notio, sua quadam propria eaque minime logica necessitate, tum in ea disciplina appareat, cui propositum est cognitionem τοῦ ἡθικοῦ explicare, tum in vita, partim in conscientiae iudicio de nostris actionibus, partim in censura morali de actionibus aliorum hominum; quumque complures, quae ab illa idea inseparabiles sunt, eamque tanquam originem respiciunt, notiones principales ad το ἡθικόν spectantes, velut officii notio et imputationis, eadem necessitate eodemque ambitu vim suam exserant, — et tamen inter eos cursus viasque, quas nostrae aetatis meditatio philosophica persequitur, magni momenti esse videatur, hoc argumentum ad disputationem revocare, — cupit Societas, ut accurate haec questio perpendatur et pertractetur:

Philosophiae morales fons et fundamentum utrum in idea moralitatis, quae immediate conscientia contineatur, et ceteris notionibus fundamentalibus, quae ex illa prodeant, explicandis quaerenda sunt, an in alio cognoscendi principio?

In translation:

Since the original idea of morality,^a or the chief concept of the highest moral laws, appears with its own peculiar, though

^a *Moralität*

106 by no means logical, necessity both in that science whose end-purpose is to expound knowledge of the ethical^a and also in real life, where it is seen partly in the judgment of conscience about our own actions, partly in our moral judging of the actions of others; and since moreover a number of chief moral concepts that are inseparable from that idea and have arisen out of it, e.g. the concept of duty and that of accountability, claim validity^b with the same necessity and in the same compass; and since, even so, given the paths followed by philosophical enquiry in our times, it seems very important to bring this object under investigation again – the Society wishes that the following question be carefully deliberated and discussed:

Is the source and basis of morals^c to be sought in an idea of morality that resides immediately in consciousness (or conscience) and in an analysis of the remaining basic moral concepts that arise out of it, or in another cognitive ground?

^a *des Sittlichen* [Schopenhauer's rendition of the Greek *tou êthikou* in the original]

^b *sich geltend machen*

^c *Moral*

I INTRODUCTION

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§1 *On the problem*

A prize question set by the Royal Dutch Society in Harlem in 1810 and successfully answered by *J. C. F. Meister*: ‘Why do philosophers diverge so much over the first basic principles of morals, but agree in the inferences and the duties that they derive from their basic principles?’ – was really an easy task in comparison with the one before us. For:

1) The present question of the Royal Society is directed at nothing less than the objectively true foundation of morals and consequently also of morality. It is an academy that raises the question: as such it does not want an admonition to rectitude and virtue directed towards practical ends, supported by grounds whose plausibility one plays up and whose weaknesses one veils over, as happens in lectures for the people; rather, since as an academy it knows only theoretical and not practical ends, it wants a purely philosophical exposition – i.e. independent of all positive postulations, all unproven presuppositions, and hence all metaphysical and even mythical hypostases – an objective, unveiled and naked exposition of the ultimate ground of all moral good conduct. – But this is a problem whose exuberant difficulty is evidenced by the fact that not only have the philosophers of all ages and lands bitten their teeth blunt over it, but all the gods of the Orient and Occident even owe their existence to it. If it is solved at this opportunity, then truly the Royal Society will not have staked its gold badly.

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2) In addition, theoretical investigation into the foundation of morals has an underlying disadvantage all its own: that it is easily taken for an undermining of morals, which could bring in its train the collapse of the edifice itself. For the practical interest is here so close to the theoretical that its well-meaning zeal is hard to restrain from untimely involvement. Not everyone is able to differentiate clearly between purely theoretical enquiry into objective truth, alien to all interest, even moral-practical interest, and a heinous attack on hallowed convictions of the heart. So anyone who sets his hand to work here must, for his own encouragement, keep present in mind at all times that nothing is further removed from the doings and dealings of human beings, and from the swirl and din of the marketplace, than the profound silence of withdrawn sanctuary in the academy, into which no sound may penetrate from outside, and where no other gods have their statue than august, naked Truth alone.

The conclusion from these two premisses is that I must be granted a total parrhesia, together with the right to doubt everything; and that if, even on these terms, I *really* achieve anything at all in this matter – then much will have been achieved.

109 But still other difficulties confront me. The Royal Society additionally demands the foundation of ethics expounded alone by itself, separately, in a short monograph, and consequently out of its connection with the entire system of any philosophy, i.e. metaphysics proper. This must make the achievement not only harder, but also necessarily incomplete. *Christian Wolff* already says: ‘The darkness in practical philosophy will not be dispelled unless it is illuminated by the light of metaphysics’ (*Practical Philosophy*,^a Part II, §28), and Kant: ‘metaphysics must come first, and without it there can be no moral philosophy at all’ (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface). For just as every religion on earth, in prescribing morality,^b does not leave it resting upon itself, but gives it support in the set of dogmas^c whose main purpose is precisely this, so in philosophy the ethical foundation itself, whatever it may be, must in turn have its basis^d and its support in some metaphysics, i.e. in an explanation given of the world and existence in general – seeing that the ultimate and true revelation concerning the inner essence of the entirety of things must necessarily cohere tightly with that concerning the ethical meaning of human acting, and that whatever is posited as the foundation of morality, if it is not to be a mere abstract principle that floats free in the air without basis in the real world, must at any rate be some kind of fact residing either in the objective world or in human consciousness, a fact that as such can only be a phenomenon itself and consequently stands in need, as do all the world’s phenomena, of a further explanation, which is then demanded of metaphysics. Philosophy is indeed so much a combined whole that it is impossible to expound any one part of it exhaustively without giving all the rest at the same time. Thus Plato says quite rightly: ‘Do you think, then, that it is possible to reach a serious understanding of the nature of the soul without understanding the nature of the world as a whole?’ – *Phaedrus*, p. 371, Bip.^{e,1} Metaphysics of nature, metaphysics of

^a *Tenebrae in philosophia practica non dispelluntur, nisi luce metaphysica affulgente.* (*Phil. Pract. [Philosophia Practicæ Universalis]*)

^b *Moralität*

^c *an der Dogmatik*

^d *Anhaltspunkt*

^e Ψυχῆς οὐκ ὄντος ἀξίως λόγου κατανοῆσαι οἷε δυνατόν εἶναι, ἄνευ τῆς τοῦ ὅλου φύσεως; (*Animæ vero naturam absque totius naturæ sufficienter cognosci posse existimas?*) [*Phaedr.* 270c. Schopenhauer refers to the Bipont edition of Plato]

morals^f and metaphysics of the beautiful mutually presuppose one another and do not complete the explanation of the essence of things and of existence as such until they are combined. Therefore, anyone who had carried *one* of these three through to its ultimate ground would have to have drawn the others into his explanation at the same time; just as anyone who had a clear understanding, exhaustive down to the ultimate ground, of any *one* thing in the world would have to have understood the rest of the world perfectly as well.

Starting from a given metaphysics that one assumed as true, one would reach the foundation of ethics by a *synthetic* route, and in this way the foundation itself would be constructed from beneath, and ethics would consequently present itself as firmly supported. By contrast, given the separation of ethics from all metaphysics that the set task makes necessary, there is nothing left but the *analytic* procedure, which starts from facts 110 either of outer experience or of consciousness.^a Though it can trace these back to their ultimate roots in the human mind, this must then remain in place as the grounding fact, as the primitive phenomenon, without itself being traced back to anything at all; and so the whole explanation remains a merely *psychological* one. Its connection with a universal metaphysical grounding viewpoint can now be suggested at most in accessory fashion. By contrast, that grounding fact, that primitive ethical phenomenon, would itself be able to be grounded in turn, if one were permitted to treat metaphysics first and, proceeding synthetically, to derive ethics from it. But that would mean presenting a complete system of philosophy, whereupon the limits of the question set would be overstepped by a long way. So I am necessitated to answer the question within the limits that it itself has drawn by its isolation.

And now finally the foundation on which I intend to place ethics will turn out to be very slender; and of the great amount that is legal, worthy of approbation and of praise in human actions, only the lesser part will prove to arise from purely moral motivating grounds,^b while the greater part will be put down to motives of another kind. This pleases less and does not strike the eyes so dazzlingly as, say, a categorical imperative that constantly stands ready to be commanded so that it in turn can command what ought to be done and what refrained from – to say nothing of other, material groundings of morals. Then nothing remains but for me to recall

^f *der Sitten*

^a [On Schopenhauer's use of 'synthetic' and 'analytic' here, see p. 5, note b in 'Preface to the first edition' above]

^b *Bewegungsgründen*

III

the speech of Ecclesiastes^c (4,6): ‘Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.’ In all cognition there is always little that is genuine, indestructible and stands the test; just as the layer of ore contains few ounces of gold hidden in a hundredweight of stone. But whether people will really, with me, prefer *secure* possession of the *great* thing, the little gold that remains in the pan, to the extensive mass that was lugged in with it – or whether they will rather accuse me of having deprived morals of their foundation rather than provided it, in so far as I show that the legal and praiseworthy actions of human beings often possess no moral content at all and mostly only a *small* part, and that they otherwise rest on motives whose effectiveness is ultimately to be traced back to the egoism of the agent – all this I must allow to be set aside, not without uneasiness, but with resignation; for I have concurred for a long time now with the knight *von Zimmermann*, when he says: ‘Think in your heart, until your death, that nothing is so rare in the world as a good judge’ (*On Loneliness*,^a Part I, ch. 3, p. 93). Yes, in my mind I already see my account – which has only such a slender basis to show for all genuine, free-willed doing of right,^b for all loving kindness,^c all noble-mindedness, wheresoever they may be found, beside those of my competitors who confidently put down broad foundations for morals that can cope with any load you like and so are fit to be shoved into the conscience of any doubter, with a threatening look askance at his own morality – I see it standing there as poor and subdued as Cordelia before King *Lear*, with her assurance of her dutiful attitude so poor in words beside the exuberant endearments of her more eloquent sisters. – Here there is surely need of strengthening the heart by way of a learned hunter’s motto, such as ‘The force of truth is strong and it will prevail’^d – which still does not give much more encouragement to someone who has lived and laboured. Meanwhile I will risk it once with the truth: for what happens to *me* will *also* happen to the truth.

§2 *General retrospect*

For the people morals are grounded in theology, as the pronounced will of God. By contrast, we see philosophers with few exceptions carefully at pains to exclude this kind of grounding, and indeed preferring to take refuge in

^c *Kohleleth*

^a *Ueber die Einsamkeit*

^b *freiwilliges Rechtthun*

^c *Menschenliebe*

^d *magna est vis veritatis, et praevalebit*

sophistic grounds simply in order to avoid it. Where does this opposition come from? Certainly a more efficacious grounding of morals than the theological cannot be thought of: for who would be so audacious as to set himself against the will of the Almighty and All-knowing? Certainly no one – if only that will were made known in a fully authentic way, an official way, so to speak, that allowed room for no doubt. But it is this condition that is not capable of being fulfilled. Instead, people seek in reverse to authenticate the law that is made known as the will of God by pointing to its correspondence with our other, that is, natural moral insights, thus appealing to the latter as what is more immediate and more certain. In addition there is the recognition^c that a moral way of acting that was set in train merely by threatened punishment and promised reward would be such a thing more in appearance than in reality; because it would surely rest at bottom upon egoism, and then what would be decisive in the final instance would be the greater or lesser ease with which one person rather than the other held beliefs on insufficient grounds. But now since *Kant* destroyed the foundations of *speculative theology* that until then had counted as secure, and in addition wanted to support theology, which had hitherto been the bearer of ethics, now upon ethics instead, so as to provide it with an – albeit ideal – existence,^a it is less thinkable than ever to ground ethics in theology, as we no longer know which of the two should be the load and which the support, and in the end we would get into a vicious circle.^b

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Precisely because of the influence of the *Kantian philosophy*, and also because of the simultaneous effect of the unparalleled advances in the collective natural sciences, in respect of which every previous age seems one of childhood beside ours, and finally because of acquaintance with Sanskrit literature, with Brahmanism and Buddhism, these oldest and most widespread religions of humanity, and thus the most noble in terms of space and time, that are also the native^c primitive religion of our own stock, which is known to be Asiatic and which is now re-gaining, in its foreign homeland, a late awareness of them – because of all this, I say, the fundamental philosophical convictions of educated Europe have undergone a transformation which many perhaps only admit hesitantly to themselves, but which is not to be denied. In consequence of this transformation the old supports of *ethics* have also become rotten – yet

^c Erkenntniß

^a eine, wenn auch nur ideelle Existenz

^b circulus vitiosus

^c heimatliche

- 113 still confidence remains that it itself can never sink, from which proceeds the conviction that there must be other supports than those hitherto, that would be adequate to the advanced insights of the age. Without doubt it is recognition of this need, which is becoming felt more and more, that prompted the Royal Society to the present, significant prize question. –

In all ages there has been much good preaching of morals; but the grounding of them has always been in a grave state. In the latter we can see on the whole the effort to find any objective truth from which ethical prescriptions might be logically derivable: it has been sought in the nature of things, or in that of human beings – but to no avail. The outcome was always that the will of human beings is directed only towards its own well-being, the sum of which we think of under the concept of *happiness*^d – a striving which leads it on quite another path than the one morals would like to prescribe for it. People tried to present happiness now as *identical* to virtue, now as a *consequence* and effect of it: both failed every time, though they did not stint on sophisms in the process. Then they tried it with purely objective, abstract principles, now discovered *a posteriori*, now *a priori*, from which ethically good conduct might perhaps be deducible; but the principles were bereft of any point of reference in the nature of human beings that would have given them the power to guide their strivings in opposition to their egoistic tendency. To harden all this here by recounting and criticizing all previous bases of morals seems to me redundant, not only because I share Augustine's opinion 'what human beings think is not to be given much importance, but rather what the truth of things is';^a but also because it would be taking owls to Athens,^b seeing that the previous attempts to ground ethics are sufficiently well known to the Royal Academy, and it makes it clear by way of the prize question that it too is convinced of their inadequacy. The less learned reader will find an incomplete yet in the main satisfactory compilation of the previous attempts in *Garve's Overview of the leading principles in moral theory*,^c and also in *Stäudlin's History of moral philosophy*^d and similar books. – It is admittedly disheartening to consider that ethics, this science that concerns life immediately, has fared no better than abstruse metaphysics and that it

^d *Glückseligkeit*

^a *non est pro magno habendum quid homines senserint, sed quae sit rei veritas* [cf. *City of God*, Book 19, ch. 3]

^b γλαυκάς εἰς Αθήνας κομιζειν [cf. Aristophanes, *Birds*, line 301]

^c *Uebersicht der vornehmsten Principien der Sittenlehre*

^d *Geschichte der Moralphilosophie*

has been constantly practised since Socrates founded it, yet is still searching for its first grounding principle. But on the other hand, in ethics much more than in any other science, the essential is contained in the first grounding principles, given that the derivations are here so easy that they perform themselves on their own. For all are capable of *inferring*, few of *judging*. For that reason long textbooks and lectures on morals are as superfluous as they are boring. That I am meanwhile permitted to presuppose all previous bases of ethics as familiar is a relief to me. For anyone who surveys how both the philosophers of antiquity and those of recent times (church belief was enough for the Middle Ages) have grasped at the most diverse and most bizarre arguments in order to provide a demonstrable foundation for the universally recognized demands of morals, and yet have done so with such patently poor success, will gauge the difficulty of the problem and judge my achievement accordingly. And anyone who has seen how all paths hitherto embarked upon did not lead to the goal will more willingly tread with me one that is very different, one that hitherto people either did not see or contemptuously turned their backs on – perhaps because it was the most natural.^{*,2} In fact my solution of the problem will remind many of Columbus' egg.^c

I will dedicate a unique critical investigation, and indeed an all the more thorough one, to the *most recent* attempt to ground ethics, the *Kantian*; partly because Kant's great reform of morals gave this science a basis that had real advantages over the previous ones, and partly because it is still the last significant thing that has happened in ethics – which is why Kant's grounding of it enjoys universal currency even today and is generally taught, albeit dressed up with a few alterations in presentation and terminology. It is the ethics of the last sixty years, which must be cleared away before we embark on another path. In addition, examining it will give me occasion to investigate and discuss most of the fundamental ethical concepts, so

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*Io dir non vi saprei per qual sventura
O piuttosto per qual fatalità,
Da noi credito ottien più l'impostura,
Che la semplice e nuda verità. –*

[I do not know how to say by what misadventure, or rather by what fatedness, imposture gains more belief among us than simple, naked truth.]

Casti [Novelle, II, viii]

^c [The traditional story is that Columbus posed the problem of standing an egg on its end unaided, which no one could solve until he showed the way by crushing one end slightly on the table – the point being that once his discoveries had been made, it became easy to see how anyone could have made them]

that I can presuppose what results from this later. But in particular, as the contradictions become clear, the critique of the Kantian grounding of morals will be the best preparation and introduction, in fact the direct path, to my own, which is diametrically opposed to Kant's in its essential points. For this reason it would be the most mistaken start if someone wanted to skip over the critique that now follows so as to get straight to the positive part of my account, which would in that case be only half intelligible.

It really is time now that ethics was interrogated for once. For more than half a century it has been resting on the comfortable cushion that Kant had spread out under it: the categorical imperative of practical reason. In our day, however, this is mostly introduced by the less grandiose but smoother and more fluent title 'the moral law',^a under which it slips through unnoticed, after a light bow towards reason and experience: but once it is at home there is no end of ordering and commanding, without its ever being called to account any further. – That Kant found comfort in it as the inventor of the thing – and once he had expelled cruder errors – was just and necessary. But to have to see how even donkeys now roll around on the cushion he laid down, which has since grown broader and broader – that is hard. I mean the everyday compendium-writers who, with the relaxed confidence of incomprehension, take themselves to have grounded ethics if only they appeal to that 'moral law' that allegedly dwells in our *reason*, and then blithely impose upon it that cumbersome and confused web of phrases with which they know how to make the clearest and simplest relationships in life incomprehensible – without ever having asked themselves seriously in an undertaking like this whether such a 'moral law', such a comfortable moral code, really stands inscribed in our head, breast or heart. So I confess to the particular satisfaction with which I now set about pulling the broad cushion away from morals, and frankly announce my purpose to show Kant's practical reason and categorical imperative as wholly unjustified, groundless and fictitious assumptions, to prove that Kant's ethics too lacks a solid foundation, and thus to deliver morals back to its old, total perplexity^b – which it must be in until I set about expounding the true moral principle of human nature that is grounded in our essence and is undoubtedly efficacious. For since this does not offer so broad a foundation as the former cushion, those who are used to things more comfortable will not abandon their old place of rest until they have clearly perceived the deep cavity in the floor on which it stands.

^a *das Sittengesetz*

^b *Rathlosigkeit*

II CRITIQUE OF THE FOUNDATION GIVEN TO ETHICS BY KANT

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§3 Overview

Kant has the great merit in ethics of having purified it of all *eudaemonism*. The ethics of the ancients was eudaemonics;^a that of the moderns mostly the doctrine of salvation.^b The ancients wanted to show virtue and happiness as identical; but these were like two shapes that never superimpose however one may arrange them. The moderns^c wanted to connect the two not according to the *principle of identity*, but according to that *of ground*, and so make happiness the consequence of virtue; but to do so they had to call on the help either of a world other than that which can possibly be cognized, or of sophisms. Among the ancients *Plato* alone is an exception: his ethics is not eudaemonistic; but instead it becomes mystical. By contrast, even the ethics of the Cynics and Stoics is simply a eudaemonism of a particular kind – I am not bereft of grounds and evidence for proving this, but I am bereft of space, given my present purpose.* – So for the ancients and moderns, with the exception of *Plato* alone, virtue was only a means to an end. Admittedly, if someone wanted to take things strictly, then even *Kant* would have banished eudaemonism from ethics more in appearance than in reality.^d For he still leaves over a secret connection between virtue and happiness, in his doctrine of the highest good, where they come together in a dark, out of the way chapter, while in the open virtue treats happiness as a stranger. Apart from that, in *Kant* the ethical principle plays the role of something quite independent of experience and its teachings, something transcendental or metaphysical. He recognizes that the human way of acting has a meaning that goes beyond all possibility of experience and is for that very reason the genuine bridge to what he calls the intelligible world, the world of noumena,^e the world of things in themselves.

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Kantian ethics owes the fame it has achieved not only to the advantages touched on just now, but to the moral purity and sublimity of its results.

* The thorough exposition can be found in *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, §16, pp. 103ff., and vol. 2, ch. 16, pp. 166ff., of the third edition. [Hübscher SW 2, 103–9; SW 3, 163–75]

^a *Eudämonik*

^b *Heilslehre*

^c *die Neueren*

^d *mehr scheinbar, als wirklich*

^e *mundus noumenon*

The majority clung to these results without troubling themselves especially about their grounding, which is very complex, abstract and presented in a highly artificial form, on which Kant had to expend all his acumen and gift for combination in order to give it a sustainable aspect. Fortunately, he devoted a specific work to the exposition of the *foundation* of his ethics, separately from the latter itself – the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, whose theme is thus precisely the same as the subject of our prize essay. For he says on p. xiii of the work's Preface: 'The present *groundwork* is nothing more than the search for and establishment of the supreme principle of morality, which constitutes by itself a business that in its purpose is complete and to be kept apart from every other moral investigation.'^a In this book we find the *groundwork*, hence what is essential to his ethics, presented strictly systematically, succinctly and acutely, as it is in no other. This, moreover, has the significant advantage of being the oldest of his ethical works, only four years younger than the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and so from the time when, despite his already numbering 61 years, the detrimental influence of age on his mind was not yet noticeable. By contrast, it is already clearly detectable in the *Critique of Practical Reason* which comes in 1788, one year later than the unfortunate re-working of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the *second edition*, in which he patently spoiled this his immortal main work. We have been given a thorough argument about this in the Preface to the new edition prepared by *Rosenkranz*, with which, after some examination of the matter, I can only agree.* The *Critique of Practical Reason* contains essentially the same as the *Groundwork* mentioned above; except that the latter gives it in more concise and strict form, while the former does so with great breadth of execution and interrupted by deviations, and also, to heighten the impression, supported by some moral declamations. When he wrote this Kant had, finally and late, achieved his well deserved fame: that made him sure of limitless attention, and he allowed more scope to the garrulousness of old age. On the other hand, as something particular to the *Critique of Practical Reason* one can adduce the exposition of the relationship between

* Its source is myself; but here I am speaking incognito.³ [Schopenhauer had acquired the then rare first (1781) edition of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1826, and made an extensive comparison of its text with that of the standard fifth edition. In 1837 he wrote to Rosenkranz, the co-editor of Kant's works, arguing for the superiority of the first edition and enclosing a long list of textual variants. (See letters of 24 August and 25 September 1837 in *GB*, 165–74.) His proposal to print the first edition with later changes as variants was adopted, setting a pattern much followed in later publications of Kant's works.]

^a [Ak. 4: 392]

freedom and necessity (pp. 169–79 of the fourth edition, and pp. 224–31 in Rosenkranz),^b which is elevated beyond all praise and certainly composed earlier, and which meanwhile corresponds entirely with the one he gives in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (pp. 560–86, *R.* pp. 438ff.);^c and secondly the moral theology, which will more and more be recognized as what Kant really intended with it. Finally, in the *Metaphysical first principles of the doctrine of virtue*, this supplement to his deplorable *Doctrine of Right* composed in the year 1797, the influence of the feebleness of age predominates. On all these grounds I take the first named *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* as my guiding thread in the present critique, and all page numbers cited without further comment from me relate to this work; I ask that this be noted. I shall consider the other two works only in an accessory and secondary way. It will be highly beneficial for understanding the present critique, which undermines Kantian ethics in its deepest ground, if the reader would first care to re-read with attention that *Groundwork* of Kant's that the critique primarily relates to, so as to make its content fully present to himself again, especially since the work occupies only 128 plus xiv pages (in Rosenkranz only 100 pages in all). I cite according to the third edition of 1792, and add the page number of the new complete edition by Rosenkranz with a preceding *R.*

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§4 On the imperative form of Kantian ethics

Kant's primary error^a lies in his conception of ethics itself, which we find most clearly announced on p. 62 (*R.* p. 54):^b 'In a practical philosophy we have to do not with providing grounds for what happens but rather laws for what *ought to happen even if it never does.*' – This is already a decided begging of the question.^c Who tells you that there are laws to which our actions *ought* to be subordinate? Who tells you that *what never happens ought to happen*? – What justifies you in assuming this in advance and then straight away pressing on us an ethics in legislative–imperative form as the only one possible? I say, in opposition to Kant, that the ethicist, as the philosopher in general, must be satisfied with explanation and interpretation of what is given, that is, what really exists or happens,

^b [Ak. 5: 94–100]

^c [See A532/B560 – A558/B586]

^a πρῶτον ψευδός [In Aristotle's *Prior Analytics* (66a16ff.) this refers to the first false premiss in a syllogism, which renders the conclusion false]

^b [see Ak. 4: 427]

^c *petitio principii*

so as to reach an *understanding*^d of it, and that he has plenty to do on this score, much more than has been done up to today, after millennia have gone by. In line with the above Kantian begging of the question, right away in the Preface, which fully pertains to the topic, it is assumed *before* any investigation that there are purely *moral laws*; which assumption remains in place thereafter and is the profoundest basis of the whole system. But we wish first to investigate the concept of a *law*. The proper and original meaning of this is restricted to the civil *law*,^e *lex*, νόμος^f a human institution, resting on human choice.^g The concept *law* has a second, derivative, figurative, metaphorical meaning in its application to nature, whose constantly unchanging ways of proceeding, partly cognized *a priori* and partly observed in it empirically, we – metaphorically – call natural laws. It is only a very small part of these natural laws that can be grasped *a priori* and that makes up what Kant acutely and superbly separated and collected together under the name *metaphysics of nature*. There is, to be sure, a law for the *human will* too, in so far as the human being belongs to nature, and indeed a strictly provable, an unbreakable, exceptionless, rock-firm law, which brings necessity with it not just ‘as if’,^a like the categorical imperative, but *really*: it is the *law of motivation*, a form of the law of causality, namely causality mediated by cognition. This is the single provable law for the human will, to which it is subordinate *as such*. It states that every action can occur only in consequence of a sufficient motive. It is, like the law of causality in general, a natural law. On the other hand, *moral laws*, independent of human rules, state institution or religious doctrine, ought not to be assumed as existing without proof: so in his initial assumption Kant commits a begging of the question. It appears all the more brazen when he adds straight away, on p. vi of the Preface,^b that a moral law is supposed to carry *absolute necessity* with it. But such a necessity has everywhere the inevitability of the outcome as its mark: how can there be talk of absolute necessity with these alleged moral laws – as an example of which he gives ‘*thou shalt (sic) not lie*’ – when, as is well known and as he himself concedes, they mostly, in fact as a rule, remain without successful outcome?^c In scientific ethics, to assume further original laws for the will independent of human rules, other than the law

^d *Verständniß*

^e *bürgerliches Gesetz*

^f [Latin and Greek for ‘law’]

^g *Willkür*

^a *vel quasi*

^b [Ak. 4: 389]

^c *erfolglos*

of motivation, one has to prove them and derive them in respect of their whole existence – if one has in mind not merely to recommend honesty in ethics, but also to practise it. Until the proof is carried out I recognize no other origin for the introduction of the concepts *law*, *prescription*, *ought* into ethics than one that is alien to philosophy, the Mosaic Decalogue. This origin is betrayed, naively even, in the above example, the first Kant provides of a moral law, by the orthography of ‘*thou shalt*’.^d But a concept that has no other origin than this to show has no right to force its way into philosophical ethics like that without further ado, but rather is ordered out until it is certified and introduced by a rightful proof. In Kant’s case we have in this concept the first begging of the question, and it is a big one. 122

Just as Kant, by this move, had taken the concept of the *moral law* as given and indubitably existing without further ado in the Preface, he does just the same on p. 8 (*R.* p. 16)^e with the closely related concept of *duty*, which is allowed in as belonging to ethics without passing any further test. Only here I am necessitated to enter a protest once again. This concept, together with its relatives, those of *law*, *commandment*, *ought*, and the like, taken in this unconditioned sense, has its origin in theological morals, and remains a foreigner in philosophical morals until it has produced a valid certification from the essence of human nature or that of the objective world. Until then I recognize for it and its relatives no other origin than the Decalogue. Overall in the Christian centuries philosophical ethics has unconsciously taken its form from theological ethics: and since this ethics is essentially one that *commands*, philosophical ethics too has appeared in the form of prescription and doctrine of duty, in all innocence and without suspecting that for this a further authority was needed first – thinking instead that this was its proper and natural form. The metaphysical ethical significance^a of human acting, i.e. that which extends beyond this existence in appearance^b and touches eternity, as undeniable as it is, and as recognized as it is by all peoples, ages and doctrines of faith, even by all philosophers (with the exception of genuine materialists), is just as little to be comprehended essentially in the form of commanding and obeying, or of law and duty. Separated from the theological presuppositions from which they issued, these concepts really lose all meaning as well, and if, like 123

^d *du sollst* [an archaic form: the non-biblical equivalent in Schopenhauer’s and today’s German would be *du sollst*]

^e [Ak. 4: 397]

^a *Bedeutsamkeit*

^b *dieses erscheinende Daseyn*

Kant, one thinks to substitute for them by speaking of an *absolute* ought and *unconditioned* duty, then one is turning the reader away with words for food, really giving him a contradiction in terms^c to digest. That *ought* has any sense and meaning at all only in relation to threatened punishment or promised reward. Thus, long before Kant was thought of, *Locke* already says: 'For since it would be utterly in vain, to suppose a rule set to the free actions of man, without annexing to it some enforcement of good and evil to determine his will; we must, where-ever we suppose a law, suppose also some reward or punishment annexed to that law.' (*On Understanding*, Bk. II, ch. 33, §6.) So the ought is necessarily conditioned by punishment or reward, and therefore, to speak Kant's language, essentially and unavoidably *hypothetical* and never, as he asserts, *categorical*. But once those conditions are thought away the concept of ought^d remains empty of sense: hence *absolute ought* is definitely a contradiction in terms. It is simply impossible to think of a commanding voice, whether it come from within or from without, except as threatening or promising: but then obedience towards it will indeed be prudent or stupid, according to circumstances, yet always self-interested,^e and so without moral worth.⁴ The total unthinkability and contradictoriness of this concept of an unconditioned ought that lies at the basis of Kant's ethics becomes apparent in his system itself later, namely in the *Critique of Practical Reason*; just as a concealed poison cannot remain in the organism, but must eventually break out and make itself some room. For that utterly *unconditioned ought* subsequently postulates for itself a condition after all, in fact more than one, namely a reward, and in addition the immortality of the one to be rewarded and a rewarder. That is admittedly necessary as soon as one has made duty and ought the grounding concept of ethics, because these concepts are essentially relative and have any meaning only through threatened punishment or promised reward. This reward postulated afterwards for virtue, which thus was working only seemingly gratuitously, appears, however, decently veiled under the name of the *highest good*, which is the unification of virtue and happiness. But at bottom this is nothing other than the morals that issues in happiness and is consequently supported by self-interest, or eudaemonism, which Kant had ceremoniously ejected through the front door of his system as heteronomous, and which now creeps back in through the back door under the name *highest good*. Thus the contradiction-concealing assumption of an *unconditional, absolute ought* avenges itself. On the other hand,

^c *Contradictio in adjecto*

^d *des Sollens*

^e *eigennützig*

the *conditioned* ought can clearly not be an ethical grounding concept, because everything that happens with an eye towards reward and punishment is necessarily an egoistic deed and as such without purely moral worth. – From all this it becomes manifest that a grander and less inhibited construal of ethics is needed, if we are serious in really wanting to give a grounding for the eternal significance of human acting that extends out beyond appearance.

Just as all *ought* is entirely linked with a condition, so too is all *duty*.^a For the two concepts are very closely related and almost identical. The single difference between them might be that *ought as such* can also rest on sheer compulsion, while *duty* presupposes obligation,^b i.e. the acceptance of duty: such obligation is in place between master and servant, superior and subordinate, regime and subject. Precisely because no one accepts a duty gratuitously, every duty also confers a right. The slave has no duty, because he has no right; but there is an *ought* for him, which rests on sheer compulsion. In the next chapter I shall set out the sole meaning that the concept *duty* can have in ethics.

Conceiving ethics in an *imperative* form, as *doctrine of duty*, and thinking of the moral worth or unworth of human actions as fulfilment or dereliction of *duties*, undeniably stems, together with the *ought*, solely from theological morals and in turn from the Decalogue. Accordingly it rests essentially on the presupposition of the human being's dependence on another will that commands him and announces reward and punishment to him, and cannot be separated from that. However well made out the presupposition of such a thing may be in theology, in no way should it silently and without further ado be drawn into philosophical morals. But then we should not assume in advance that in philosophical morals *the imperative form*, the setting out of commandments, laws and duties, is self-evident and essential to it; and it is a poor expedient to replace the external condition that essentially attaches to these concepts by their very nature with the word 'absolute' or 'categorical', as a result of which, as we have said, a contradiction in terms^a arises.

So Kant had borrowed this *imperative form* of ethics silently and sight unseen from theological morals, whose presuppositions – theology, in other words – really lie at its basis and are in fact inseparable from it, as what alone gives it sense and meaning, and indeed are implicitly^b contained in

^a *Pflicht*

^b *Verpflichtung*

^a *Contradictio in adjecto*

^b *implicite*

it. After that it was child's play^c for him to develop a theology, the well known moral theology, again out of his morals at the end of his exposition. For he just needed to bring out expressly the concepts which lay hidden at the basis of his morals, posited implicitly by the *ought*, and now set them up explicitly^d as postulates of practical reason. Thus there appeared, to the great edification of the world, a theology that was supported solely by morals, and indeed had issued from it. But that came about because this morals itself rests on hidden theological presuppositions. I intend no sarcastic simile: but in its form the situation is analogous to the surprise that an artist in natural magic provides for us by having us find an object in the place he had cleverly slipped it into before. – Expressed abstractly,^e

126 Kant's procedure is this: he makes into the result what had to have been the principle or the presupposition (theology), and took as presupposition what ought to have been derived as a result (the command). But after he had turned the thing on its head like this, no one, not even he himself, recognized it for what it was, namely the old, familiar theological morals. We shall examine the performance of this trick in the sixth and seventh paragraphs.

It is true that before Kant the conception of morals in the imperative form and as a doctrine of duty was a frequent custom in philosophy too: only then they grounded morals also in the will of a God already proved in other ways, and remained consistent. But as soon as someone, like Kant, undertook a grounding independent of this and wanted to establish ethics without metaphysical presuppositions, they were no longer entitled without further derivation to place that imperative form, that 'you ought' and 'it is your duty', at its basis.

§5 *On the assumption of duties to ourselves in particular*

Kant left this form of the doctrine of duty that was so welcome to him unmodified in respect of its implementation too, in so far as he, like his predecessors, posited alongside duties to others duties to ourselves as well. Since I utterly reject this assumption, I would like to insert my explanation for that as an episode here, where continuity best accommodates it.

Duties to ourselves must, as all duties, be either duties of right or duties of love. *Duties of right*^a towards ourselves are impossible, because of the

^c *leichtes Spiel*

^d *explicite*

^e *in abstracto*

^a *Rechtspflichten*

self-evident fundamental principle ‘No injury is done to someone who wills it’:^b for since what I do is at all times what I will, what happens to me from myself too is always only what I will, and consequently never a wrong.^c But as regards *duties of love*^d towards ourselves, morals finds its work here already done and arrives too late. The impossibility of violating the duty of self-love is already presupposed by the highest commandment of Christian morals: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’, in which the love that everyone harbours for himself is assumed in advance as the maximum and the condition of every other love. But ‘Love yourself as your neighbour’ is by no means added, in which case everyone would feel that too little was demanded – this would also be the sole duty according to which a work of supererogation^e would be on the daily schedule. Even Kant himself says, in the *Metaphysical first principles of the doctrine of virtue*, p. 13 (R. p. 230):^f ‘What everyone already wants unavoidably, of his own accord, does not come under the concept of duty.’ Meanwhile this concept of duties to ourselves has always maintained its high standing and is generally held in special favour – which is not something to be surprised at. But it exercises a cheering effect in cases where people start to become concerned about their own person and so talk quite seriously about the duty of self-preservation; while it suffices to note that fear will soon give them legs and that it requires no commandment of duty to push from behind.

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What is usually presented as duties to ourselves is first and foremost a line of reasoning against *suicide*, stuck fast in prejudices and conducted from the shallowest of grounds. To the human being alone, who unlike an animal is not exposed merely to *bodily* suffering that is restricted to the present, but also to the incomparably greater *mental* suffering^g that borrows from future and past, nature has granted as compensation the privilege of being able to end his life when he prefers, even before she herself sets a limit to it, consequently of living not necessarily as long as he *can*, like the animal, but only as long as he *wills*. Now whether, on ethical grounds, he has to renounce this privilege again is a difficult question, which cannot be decided at least by the customary shallow arguments. Even the grounds against suicide that Kant is unashamed to put forward on p. 53 (R. p. 48) and p. 67 (R. p. 57)^h I can in all conscience entitle nothing other than

^b *volenti non fit injuria*

^c *Unrecht*

^d *Liebespflichten*

^e *Opus supererogationis*

^f [Ak. 6: 386]

^g *geistigen Leiden*

^h [Ak. 4: 422, 429]

wretchednesses that do not even deserve an answer. One has to laugh when one imagines that reflections of that sort were supposed to have wrested the dagger from the hands of Cato, Cleopatra, Cocceius Nerva (Tacitus, *Annals*, VI, 26) or Arria the wife of Paetus (Pliny, *Letters*, III, 16). If there really are genuine moral motives against suicide, then they lie very deep and are not to be reached with the plumb line of the usual ethics in any case; they belong rather to a higher mode of consideration than is appropriate even to the standpoint of the present essay.*

What tends to be put forward besides this under the rubric of duties to self are partly prudential rules, partly dietetic prescriptions, neither of which belong in morals proper. Finally they add to this the prohibition of unnatural lust, that is of onanism, pederasty and bestiality.⁵ Of these, firstly onanism is chiefly a vice of childhood, and combating it is much more a matter of dietetics than of ethics, which is why the books against it are written by medical people (such as Tissot, among others), not by moralists. Once dietetics and hygiene have done their bit in this matter and smashed it down with irrefutable grounds, if morals now wants to take it in hand as well, it finds the work already done, to the extent that little remains for itself. – Next, bestiality is a wholly abnormal offence that occurs very rarely, thus really something exceptional, also an outrage and contrary to human nature to such a high degree, that it itself speaks against itself and deters more than any grounds of reason would be able to. Incidentally, as a degradation of human nature, it is really and truly an offence against the species as such and in the abstract,^a not against human individuals. – Consequently, of the three sexual offences in question only pederasty falls within ethics, and will find its place there without being forced, in the discussion of justice: for it infringes against justice, and the ‘no injury is done to him who wills it’ cannot be made to count against this – for the injustice lies in the seduction of the younger and inexperienced party, who is physically and morally corrupted by it.⁶

§6 *On the foundation of Kantian ethics*

Linked immediately to the *imperative form* of ethics, which was proved in §4 to be a begging of the question,^b is a favourite idea^c of Kant’s, which

* They are ascetic grounds: they can be found in the Fourth Book of my main work, vol. 1, §69.

^a *in abstracto*

^b *petitio principii*

^c *Lieblingsvorstellung*

is to be forgiven, but not adopted. – Sometimes we see a doctor who has applied a remedy with brilliant success go on to administer it in almost all illnesses: I compare him to Kant. In the separation of the *a priori* from the *a posteriori* he has made the most brilliant and influential discovery that metaphysics can boast of. Is it any wonder that he now seeks to apply this method and separation everywhere? So *ethics* too is supposed to consist of a pure, i.e. *a priori* cognizable, part and an empirical part. He rejects the latter as inadmissible for the *grounding* of ethics. But to find out the former and present it separately is his project in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, which is accordingly supposed to be a pure *a priori* science, in the same manner as the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* that he produced. That *moral law*, then, that was assumed to exist in advance without justification and without derivation or proof, is in addition supposed to be a law cognizable *a priori*, independent of all *inner* and *outer experience*, ‘*resting solely on concepts of pure reason*, it is supposed to be a *synthetic principle a priori*’ (*Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 56 of the fourth edition, *R.* p. 142):^a directly connected with this is that it must be merely *formal*, like everything that is cognized *a priori*, and so must relate merely to the *form*, not the *content*, of actions. Just think what that means! He expressly adds (p. vi of the Preface to the *Groundwork* – *R.* p. 5) that it ‘must not be sought in the nature of the human being (the subjective) or in the circumstances of the world (the objective)’^b and (in the same place, p. vii, *R.* p. 6), that ‘it must not borrow the least thing from acquaintance with the human being, i.e. from anthropology’. Again he repeats (p. 59, *R.* p. 52)^c ‘that one should not let oneself think of deriving one’s moral principle from the special constitution of human nature’; similarly (p. 60, *R.* p. 52):^d that ‘Everything that is derived from a special natural constitution of humanity, from certain feelings and propensities, and even, if possible, from a special tendency that would be peculiar to human nature and would not necessarily have to hold for the will of *every rational being*’ could yield no basis for the moral law. This proves beyond contradiction that he puts forward the alleged moral law *not as a fact of consciousness*, something empirically demonstrable, which is what the philosophers of more recent times, one and all, would like to make it out to be.⁷ – Along with all inner experience, he even more decisively refuses all outer experience, in that he rejects any empirical basis for morals. Thus – and I

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^a [See Ak. 5: 31]

^b [Ak. 4: 389. Schopenhauer adds the parentheses ‘(the subjective)’ and ‘(the objective)’]

^c [Ak. 4: 425]

^d [Ak. 4: 425]

ask that this be noted well – he does not ground his moral principle on any demonstrable *fact of consciousness* at all, such as an inner disposition;^c – no more than on any objective relationship of things in the external world. No! That would be an empirical basis. Instead *pure concepts a priori*, i.e. concepts that as yet have no content, either from outer or inner experience, and in other words are mere shells without a core, are supposed to be the basis of morals. Weigh up how much that means: human consciousness as well as the whole external world, together with all the experience and facts in them, are pulled away from under our feet. We have nothing to stand on. What are we supposed to hold on to then? A couple of totally abstract, utterly substance-less concepts, which are likewise entirely floating in the air. From these, in fact properly from the mere form of their connection to judgments, a *law* is supposed to issue that is supposed to be valid with so-called *absolute necessity* and have the power to bring bit and bridle to bear upon the stress of desires, the storm of passion, the gigantic stature of egoism. Now that is something we would like to see.

131 With this pre-judged conception that *apriority* and purity from everything empirical is indispensably required for the basis of morals, a second favourite idea of Kant's is closely linked: that is, the moral principle to be put forward, as it must be a *synthetic principle a priori, of merely formal content*, and thus solely a matter for *pure reason*, is as such supposed to be valid not for *human beings alone*, but rather *for all possible rational beings* and 'only because of that' to be valid for human beings as well, on the side and by accident.^a For in this regard it is based on *pure reason* (which knows nothing but itself and the principle of contradiction) and not on any kind of feeling. This *pure reason*, then, is not taken here as a cognitive power of *human beings*, which is all that it really is, but *hypostasized as something subsisting for itself*,^b without any authority and as the most pernicious example and precedent – which our present pitiful philosophical period can serve to bear out. Meanwhile this erection of a morals not for humans as humans, but for *all rational beings* as such, is such a pressing central topic and favourite idea of Kant's that he does not tire of repeating it at every opportunity. Against this I say that one never has authority to set up a genus which is given to us only in one single species: one could import nothing whatsoever into its concept except what one had taken out of this *one* species, with the result that whatever one claimed about the genus would really always have to be understood of the species

^c *Anlage*

^a *per accidens*

^b *etwas für sich Bestehendes*

alone – while in thinking away without authority what pertains to this species, so as to form the genus, one might perhaps have removed precisely the condition of possibility of the remaining properties that were hypostasized as the genus. Just as we know *intelligence as such* exclusively as a property of animal beings alone and so are never justified in thinking of it as existing otherwise and independently of animal nature, similarly we know *reason* solely as a property of the human race and are not in any way authorized to think of it as existing outside of that and to set up a genus ‘rational being’ that would be distinct from its sole species ‘human being’, still less to set up for such imaginary *rational beings* laws in the abstract.^c To talk of rational beings apart from humans is no different from wanting to talk of *heavy beings* apart from bodies. One cannot rid oneself of the suspicion that here Kant was thinking somewhat of the dear little angels, or at least counted on their assistance in the conviction of his reader. At any rate there is a tacit presupposition here of the ‘rational soul’ which is supposed to be quite distinct from the ‘sensitive soul’ and the ‘vegetative soul’,^a and to survive after death and then be nothing but rational. But he himself expressly and extensively put an end to this utterly transcendent hypostasis in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Meanwhile in Kantian ethics, especially in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, we see the thought always hovering in the background that the inner, eternal essence of the human being consists in *reason*. Here, where the topic enters the discussion only incidentally, I must be content with the sheer assertion of the opposite, namely that reason, and the cognitive faculty in general, is something secondary, something belonging to appearance, indeed conditioned by the organism, while by contrast the genuine core, the only thing metaphysical and hence indestructible in the human being is *his will*.

So because Kant wanted to carry the method he had applied with such good fortune in theoretical philosophy over to practical philosophy, and accordingly wanted to separate pure cognition *a priori* from empirical *a posteriori* here as well, he assumed that just as we cognize the laws of space, time and causality *a priori*, so too – or at least in analogous fashion – the moral guiding rule for our acting^b was given to us prior to all experience and manifested itself as categorical imperative, as absolute ought. But there is a *difference* as wide as the heavens between those theoretical cognitions *a priori*, which rest on the fact that they express the mere forms of our intellect, i.e. its functions, through whose mediation alone we are able to

^c in abstracto

^a anima rationalis, anima sensitiva, anima vegetativa

^b Thun

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apprehend an objective world and in which this world *must* then present itself, those forms being absolutely law-giving for it, so that all experience *must* at all times correspond with them precisely, just as everything I see through a blue glass *must* present itself as blue – and on the other hand that alleged moral law *a priori*, which experience pours scorn upon at every step, and which indeed, according to Kant himself, leaves it doubtful whether it has even once turned in the direction of experience. What utterly disparate things are here put together under the concept of *apriority*! Furthermore, Kant overlooked the fact that in theoretical philosophy, as a consequence of his own doctrine, it is precisely the *apriority* of the above-mentioned cognitions independent of experience that restricts them to mere *appearance*, i.e. the representation of the world in our head, and entirely deprives them of any validity with respect to the *essence in itself* of things, i.e. what is in existence independently of our apprehension. Corresponding to this, in practical philosophy too his alleged moral law, if it arises *a priori* in our heads, would likewise have to be merely a form of *appearance* and leave the essence in itself of things untouched. Except that this inference would stand in the greatest contradiction both with the matter itself and with Kant's views about it. For all the way through (e.g. *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 175, R. p. 228)^a he presents precisely *the moral in us*^b as being in the closest connection with the true *essence in itself* of things, and indeed as coinciding with it immediately; in the *Critique of Pure Reason* too wherever the mysterious *thing in itself* steps forward somewhat more clearly it makes itself known as *the moral in us, as will*. – But he disregarded this.

In §4 I showed that Kant adopted the *imperative form* of ethics, and hence the concepts of ought, of law and of duty, without further ado from theological morals, while he had to leave behind what alone lends these concepts any force and meaning there. But then, so as to ground these concepts after all, he goes as far as demanding that the *concept of duty* itself be also the *ground of the fulfilment* of duty, in other words *that which obligates*.^c An action, he says (p. 11/R. p. 18),^d has genuine moral worth only when it happens exclusively from *duty* and merely for the sake of *duty*, without any inclination towards it. Worth of character is to commence only when someone, without sympathy of the heart, cold and indifferent

^a [Ak. 5: 97]

^b *das Moralische in uns*

^c *das Verpflichtende*

^d [Ak. 4: 398]

to the sufferings of others, and *not properly born to be a philanthropist*,^c nevertheless displays beneficence^f merely for the sake of tiresome *duty*. This assertion, which outrages genuine moral feeling, this apotheosis of unkindness^g which directly opposes the Christian moral doctrine^h that places loveⁱ above all else and allows nothing to count without it (1 Corinthians 13, 3), this tactless moral pedantry has been satirized by *Schiller* in two apt epigrams, entitled 'Scruples of Conscience and Decision'. The immediate occasion for these seems to have been provided by some passages from the *Critique of Practical Reason* that are quite relevant here, such as, e.g. p. 150 (R. p. 211):^j 'The disposition incumbent upon a human being to have in observing the moral law is to do so from *duty*, not from *voluntary liking* nor even from an endeavour he undertakes *uncommanded*, gladly and of his own accord.' – It has to be *commanded*! What a slave-morality!^k And in the same work p. 213 (R. p. 257),^l where we find 'that feelings of compassion and soft-hearted sympathy are themselves burdensome to right-thinking persons, because they bring their well-considered maxims into confusion, and produce the wish to be freed from them and subject to lawgiving reason alone'. I assert with confidence that (unless he has ulterior intentions) what opens the hand of the beneficent agent^m above (p. 11, R. p. 18, cited) can never be anything other than slavish *fear of gods*,ⁿ never mind whether he entitles his fetish 'categorical imperative' or Fitzliputzli.* For what else could move a hard heart but fear alone?

In correspondence with the above views, according to p. 13 (R. p. 19)^a the moral worth of an action is not supposed to reside at all in the *intention* from which it happened, but in the maxim that someone was following. Against this I offer the reflection that the *intention alone* decides on the worth or unworth of the deed, which is why the same deed, according to its intention, can be reprehensible or praiseworthy. Hence also, whenever an action of any moral import is debated among human beings, everyone

* More correctly Huitzilopochtli, Mexican deity.

^c zum Menschenfreunde

^f Wohlthaten

^g Lieblosigkeit ['lovelessness']

^h Sittenlehre

ⁱ Liebe

^j [Ak. 5: 84]

^k Sklavenmoral

^l [Ak. 5: 118]

^m Wohltäter

ⁿ Deisdämonie

^a [Ak. 4: 399]

investigates into the *intention* and judges the action solely in accordance with it; just as, conversely, it is with the *intention* alone that everyone justifies himself if he sees his action misinterpreted, or excuses himself if it has had a disadvantageous result.

On p. 14 (R. p. 20),^b we finally receive the definition of the grounding concept of Kantian ethics, *duty*: it is 'the necessity of an action, out of respect for the law'. – But what is *necessary* happens and is inevitable; by contrast, actions from duty not only mostly fail to occur, but Kant himself even admits on p. 25 (R. p. 28)^c that of the disposition to act from pure duty we have *no sure examples at all*; and on p. 26 (R. p. 29):^d 'it is absolutely impossible by means of experience to make out with certainty *a single case* in which an action in conformity with duty rested simply on the representation of duty', and likewise p. 28 (R. p. 30) and p. 49 (R. p. 50).^e In what sense, then, can *necessity* be attached to such an action? Since it is fair always to interpret an author in the most favourable way, let us say that his meaning amounts to an action's being *objectively* necessary, but *subjectively* contingent. Only this in itself is not so easily thought as it is said: for where is the *object* of this *objective* necessity, whose result in objective reality mostly, and perhaps always, fails to occur? For all fairness of interpretation, I cannot avoid saying that the expression 'necessity of an action' in the definition is nothing but an artificially concealed, highly forced circumlocution for the word *ought*. This purpose becomes even clearer to us, if we note that in the same definition the word *Achtung*, respect, is used, where *obedience* was meant. For in the footnote, p. 16 (R. p. 21),^f we read: '*Respect* signifies merely the subordination of my will to a law. Immediate determination by means of the law and consciousness of this is called *respect*.' – In which language? What is offered here is called *Gehorsam*, obedience, in German. But since the word *respect* cannot be so inappropriately put in place of the word *obedience* on no grounds, it must be serving some purpose, and this is obviously none other than to draw a veil over the ancestry of the imperative form and the concept of duty in *theological* morals – just as we saw earlier that the expression *necessity of an action*, which usurps the place of *ought* in such a forced and clumsy way, was chosen simply for the reason that *ought*^a is precisely the language of the

^b [Ak. 4: 400]

^c [Ak. 4: 406]

^d [Ak. 4: 407]

^e [Ak. 4: 408, 419]

^f [Ak. 4: 401]

^a *Soll* [in English translation of the Commandments 'shall' or 'shalt' is more common]

Decalogue. The above definition ‘duty is the necessity of an action out of respect for the law’, in less forced and less concealed language, i.e. without its mask, would read: ‘*Duty* signifies an action that *ought* to occur out of *obedience* to a law.’ This is ‘the poodle’s core’.^b

But now the *law*, this ultimate foundation stone of Kantian ethics! *What is its content? And where is it written?* This is the key question. I observe straight away that there are *two* questions: one concerns the *principle*, the other the *foundation* of ethics, two quite distinct things, although they are mostly conflated, and sometimes even intentionally so.

The *principle* or the highest *basic proposition*^c of an ethics is the shortest and most concise expression of the way of acting that it prescribes, or, should it not have an imperative form, the way of acting to which it ascribes genuine moral worth. So it is the instruction to virtue as such that that ethics gives, expressed in a *single* proposition, in other words the ‘what’^d of virtue. – The *foundation* of an ethics, by contrast, is the ‘why’^e of virtue, the *ground* of that obligation or recommendation or approbation, whether it be sought in the nature of the human being, or in external relationships in the world, or in whatever else. As in *all* sciences, one should clearly distinguish the ‘what’ from the ‘why’ in *ethics* too. However, most ethical theorists deliberately blur this distinction: probably because the ‘what’ is so easy to state, the ‘why’ by contrast so frightfully difficult; that is why they gladly seek to compensate the poverty on *one* side with the wealth on the *other*, and, by combining both in a *single* proposition, seek to bring about a happy marriage between Penia and Poros.^f This mostly happens through their not stating the ‘what’ – which is well known to everyone – in all its simplicity, but forcing it into an artificial formula, from which it first has to be inferred as a conclusion from given premisses; and then for the reader it feels as if he had experienced not merely the thing, but the ground of the thing. From this one can easily convince oneself of most of the universally familiar moral principles. But since, in the next Part, I am not proposing any tricks of this sort myself, but instead have it in mind to proceed honestly and not to validate the *principle* of ethics at the same time as its *foundation*, but rather to separate the two quite clearly, I will here and now reduce the ‘what’ – the *principle*, the *basic proposition*, over whose content all ethical theorists are really united, however many

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^b [See Goethe, *Faust* I, 1323, where Mephistopheles emerges from his disguise as a poodle]

^c *Das Princip oder der oberste Grundsatz* [*Grundsatz* is elsewhere translated as ‘principle’]

^d *das ὄτι*

^e *das διότι*

^f *der Πενία mit dem Πόρος* [Poverty with Resource: see Plato, *Symposium*, 203b–c]

different forms they may clothe it in – to *that* expression of it that I take to be the simplest of all and the purest: ‘Harm no one; rather help everyone to the extent that you can’.^a This is really the proposition that all teachers of morality^b labour to *ground*, the common result of their deductions of such diverse kinds: it is the ‘what’ for which the ‘why’ is still being sought, the consequence whose ground we long for, and is itself consequently just the given^c for which the answer sought^d is the problem of every ethics, as it is of the present prize question. The solution of this problem will deliver the proper *foundation* of ethics, which people have been seeking, like the stone of the wise, for millennia. But that the given, the ‘what’, the principle, really has its purest expression in the above formula is apparent in the fact that it relates to every other moral principle as a conclusion to premisses, or as that which is people’s real intended destination; so that every other moral principle is to be regarded as a circumlocution, an indirect or oblique expression of that simple proposition. This applies, e.g., even to that trivial basic proposition that is taken to be simple: ‘Do not do to another what you do not want to be done to you’,^{e,*} the deficiency in which – that it expresses merely duties of right and not of virtue – can easily be remedied by repeating it without the ‘do not’s’. For then it too will really be saying: ‘Harm no one; rather help everyone to the extent that you can’; but it leads there by a roundabout route and so takes on the look of having also given the real ground, the ‘why’ of that prescription, which definitely is not the case, since from the fact that I do not want something to happen to me it by no means follows that I ought not to do it to others. The same applies to every *principle* or highest *basic proposition* of morals hitherto put forward.

If we now return to our question above: how does the *law*, in whose observance, according to Kant, *duty* consists, read; and what is it grounded in? – then we will find that Kant too has linked the *principle* of morals closely with its *foundation* in a highly artificial manner. Now I recall Kant’s demand that we bear in mind right at the outset that the moral principle should be purely *a priori* and purely formal, indeed should be a synthetic proposition *a priori*, and so should have no material content and rest

* Hugo Grotius attributes it to the Emperor Severus⁸

^a *Neminem laede; imo omnes, quantum potes, iuva*

^b *Sittenlehrer*

^c *das Datum*

^d *das Quaesitum*

^e *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*

on nothing empirical, neither something objective in the external world nor something subjective in consciousness, which any kind of feeling, inclination, drive would be. Kant was acutely conscious of the difficulty of this task; because he says at p. 60 (*R.* p. 53):^f ‘Here, then, we see philosophy put in a precarious position, which is to be firm even though there is nothing in heaven or earth from which it depends or on which it is based.’ All the more must we look forward in suspense to the solution of the task he has set himself, and await with curiosity how something is to come into being out of nothing, i.e. how the laws of material human acting are supposed to concretize out of pure *a priori* concepts, without any empirical and material content – a process whose symbol we could consider that chemical one by which solid sal ammoniac comes into existence before our very eyes out of three invisible gases (nitrogen, hydrogen and chlorine), and thus in apparently empty space. – However I wish to present the process by which Kant solves this difficult task more clearly than he himself wished or was able to. This might be all the more necessary, as the process seldom seems to be understood correctly. For almost all Kantians have made the mistake that Kant puts the categorical imperative forward as a fact of consciousness; but then it would be grounded *anthropologically*, through *experience*, albeit inner experience, and thus *empirically* – which runs dead 139 against Kant’s view and is repeatedly rejected by him. Thus he says on p. 48 (*R.* p. 44)^a that ‘it cannot be made out empirically whether there is any such categorical imperative at all’; and p. 49 (*R.* p. 45): ‘the possibility of the categorical imperative has to be investigated wholly *a priori*; since we do not here have the advantage of its reality being given in experience’. But his pupil, *Reinhold*, is already caught in the error I mentioned, since in his *Contributions to an Overview of Philosophy at the Beginning of the 19th Century*,^b volume I, p. 21, he says: ‘Kant assumes the moral law as an immediately certain *factum*,^c as the original fact^d of moral consciousness.’ But if Kant had wanted to ground the categorical imperative as a fact of consciousness, and so empirically, then he would not have omitted at least to prove it as such. But nowhere is anything of the sort to be found. To my knowledge the first arrival of the categorical imperative occurs in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (p. 802 in the first edition and p. 830 in the fifth),

^f [Ak. 4: 425]

^a [This and the next quotation, Ak. 4: 419]

^b *Beiträge zur Uebersicht der Philosophie am Anfange des 19. Jahrhunderts* [full title: *Beyträge zur leichten Uebersicht des Zustandes der Philosophie bey dem Anfange des 19. Jahrhunderts*]

^c *Faktum*

^d *ursprüngliche Thatsache*

where it arrives unannounced, and connected with the previous sentence only by an utterly unjustified ‘Therefore’,^e quite out of the blue.^f It is formally introduced for the first time in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, which we have paid special attention to here, and in a wholly *aprioristic* manner at that, by way of a deduction from concepts. By contrast, a ‘Formula of Concord of Criticism’^g to be found in the fifth volume of that journal of *Reinhold*’s recently referred to, which is so important to critical philosophy, even puts forward the following proposition: ‘We distinguish moral self-consciousness from *experience*, to which the former, as an original fact which no knowledge can surpass, is bound in human consciousness, and we understand by this self-consciousness *the immediate consciousness of duty, i.e. of necessity*, the lawlikeness of the will that is independent of pleasure and displeasure, to be assumed as the incentive and guiding rule of actions of the will.’ – Here we certainly have ‘a handsome proposition, yes, and one that proposes something too’ (Schiller^a). But seriously: what
 140 an unashamed begging of the question^b we see Kant’s moral law grown into here! If *that* were true, then ethics would certainly have a foundation of incomparable solidity, and there would be no need of prize questions to encourage the quest for it. But then the greatest wonder would also be that we had discovered such a fact of consciousness so late, while throughout millennia people were zealously and laboriously seeking a basis for morals. However, by what means *Kant* himself gave occasion for the mistake I have reprimanded, I shall impart further below. And yet we could be surprised at the uncontested prevalence of such a basic mistake among the Kantians: but they never once noticed, while writing their countless books on Kant’s philosophy, the deformation that the *Critique of Pure Reason* underwent in the second edition, and because of which it became an incoherent book that contradicted itself – as has only now come to light, and, I think, been quite correctly discussed in Rosenkranz’s Preface to the second volume of the Complete Edition of Kant’s works. One must bear in mind that for many learned people incessant teaching from their professorial chairs and in their writings leaves only a little time for learning. The saying ‘by teaching I learn’^c is not unconditionally true, and sometimes one would rather parody it thus: ‘by always teaching I learn nothing’;^d and even⁹ what *Diderot* puts

^e *Daher*

^f *ganz ex nunc*

^g *Formula concordiae des Kriticismus*

^a [*Die Philosophen* (‘The Philosophers’), line 24]

^b *petitio principii*

^c *docendo disco* [after Seneca, epistle 7]

^d *semper docendo nihil disco*

in the mouth of Rameau's nephew is not without grounds: 'And these teachers, do you really believe they will understand the sciences in which they give instruction? A farce, my dear sir, a farce.^c If they possessed these pieces of knowledge enough to teach them, then they wouldn't be teaching them.' – 'And why?' 'They would have wasted their lives in studying them.' (Goethe's translation, p. 104.^f) – Also Lichtenberg says: 'I have frequently observed that people of a profession often do not know the best.'^g However (to get back to Kantian morals), as far as the public is concerned, most people instantly presuppose, provided the result is in tune with their moral feelings, that there will be something right about its derivation, and will not get deeply involved with the latter if it looks difficult; instead they will rely at this point on people who are 'specialists'.^h

So Kant's *grounding of his moral law* is in no way the empirical proof of it as a fact of consciousness, nor an appeal to the moral feeling, nor a begging of the questionⁱ under the distinguished modern name of the 'absolute postulate'; rather it is a very subtle thought process, which he performs for us twice, pp. 17 and 51 (*R.* pp. 22 and 46),^j and of which the following is a clarified exposition.

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Since by spurning all empirical incentives for the will Kant has removed in advance, as empirical, everything objective and everything subjective on which a law for the will could be grounded, there remains nothing left for him as *material*^a for this *law*, except its own *form*. Now this is nothing but *lawlikeness*.^b But *lawlikeness* consists in validity for all, in other words in *universal validity*.^c This therefore becomes the *material*. Consequently the content of the law is nothing other than its very *universal validity*. As a result it will go: 'Act only in accordance with that maxim, of which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law for all rational beings.' – This, then, is the universally misknown, genuine *grounding of the moral principle by Kant*, and hence the foundation of his entire ethics. – Compare also *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 61 (*R.* p. 147),^d end of Remark 1. – I express my sincere admiration for the great acumen with which Kant

^c *Possen*

^f [Of Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew* (1769)]

^g [*Miscellaneous Writings* (*Vermischte Schriften*), 1844, vol. 1, p. 169]

^h *Leute 'vom Fach'*

ⁱ *petitio principii*

^j [Ak. 4: 402, 420]

^a *Stoff*

^b *Gesetzmäßigkeit*

^c *Allgemeingültigkeit*

^d [Ak. 5: 34–5]

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carried out this trick, but I continue on with my serious examination in accordance with the standard of truth. I further remark simply, with the purpose of resumption in future, that *reason*, since and in so far as it completes the special line of reasoning just expounded, acquires the name of *practical reason*. But the categorical imperative of practical reason is the law that emerges as the result of the thought process expounded: thus in no way is practical reason – as most people, and indeed *Fichte* too, regarded it – a specific faculty that cannot be further reduced, an occult quality,^c a kind of morality-instinct, akin to *Hutcheson's* moral sense; rather it is, as Kant himself says in the Preface, p. xii (R. p. 8)^f and often enough elsewhere, one and the same with *theoretical reason*, that is, it is theoretical reason itself in so far as it completes the thought process we have expounded. *Fichte* calls Kant's categorical imperative an *absolute postulate* (*Basis of the Entire Science of Knowledge*,^g Tübingen 1802, p. 240, Remark). This is the modern euphemistic expression for begging the question, and that is also how he himself consistently took the categorical imperative, so he is also included in the mistake castigated above.

Now the objection to which this basis Kant has provided for morals is at once and immediately subject is that this origin of a moral law within us is impossible, because it presupposes that a human being might quite spontaneously come up with the idea of looking around for and enquiring about a *law* for his will, to which his will had to submit itself and conform. But it is impossible for this to enter his mind spontaneously, and it could do so at most once another moral incentive, positively efficacious, real and announcing itself as such spontaneously, influencing him, indeed pressing itself on him unbidden, had provided the first impulse and occasion for it. But something like this would conflict with Kant's assumption that the above thought process *itself* is supposed to be the origin of all moral concepts, the jumping-off point^h for morality. So as long as that is *not* the case, then since by hypothesis^a there are no moral incentives other than the thought process we have expounded, then the canonical rule^b of human acting remains simply egoism, under the guidance of the law of motivation, i.e. the wholly empirical and egoistic motives of each occasion determine the acting of a human being in every individual case, alone

^c *qualitas occulta*

^f [Ak. 4: 391]

^g *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftenlehre*

^h *punctum saliens*

^a *ex hypothesi*

^b *Richtschnur*

and undisturbed – since under this presupposition there exists for him no demand, and no ground, for it to occur to him to ask after a law which would restrict his willing and to which he would have to submit it, let alone for him to investigate and ruminate about such a thing, whereby it would first become possible for him to get into the strange train of thought of the above reflection. In this it makes no difference what degree of clarity one grants the Kantian process of reflection, whether one cares to tune it down, say, to a merely obscurely felt deliberation. For no alteration in this challenges the basic truths that nothing comes out of nothing, and that an effect requires a cause. The moral incentive simply must, like every motive that moves the will, be one that announces itself spontaneously, that therefore has positive effect, and consequently is *real*:^c and since for a human being only what is empirical, or at any rate what is presupposed as possibly present empirically, has reality, the moral incentive must in fact be an *empirical* one, and as such must announce itself unbidden, come to us without waiting upon our asking after it, press itself upon us spontaneously, and this with such force that it can at least possibly overcome the gigantically strong egoistic motives that stand opposed to it. For morals has to do with the *real*:^d acting of human beings and not with aprioristic building of houses made of cards, to whose outcomes no human being would turn in the seriousness and stress of life, and whose effect, therefore, in face of the storm of the passions, would be as great as an enema syringe at a raging fire. I have already mentioned above that Kant regards it as a great merit of his moral law that it is grounded merely on abstract, pure concepts *a priori* and hence on *pure reason*, which is to make it valid not only for human beings, but for all rational beings. We must regret all the more that pure, abstract concepts *a priori*, without real substance^e and without any empirical basis of any kind, could at least never set *human beings* in motion: I cannot say the same for other rational beings. Thus the second failure of the Kantian basis of morality is lack of substance. This failure has not been remarked before, probably because the proper *foundation* of Kantian morals, which was clearly expounded above, has been fundamentally clear to few if any^f of those who have celebrated and propagated it. The second failure, then, is utter lack of reality and hence of possible efficacy. It floats in the air, like a spider's web of the most subtle, contentless concepts, is based on nothing, and so can support nothing and

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^c *reale*^d *wirklichen*^e *Gehalt*^f *den allerwenigsten*

144 move nothing. And yet Kant burdened it with a load of infinite weight, namely the presupposition of freedom of the will. Despite his repeatedly expressed conviction that freedom cannot be present in the actions of human beings at all, that theoretically it cannot even be comprehended in respect of its possibility (*Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 168, *R.* p. 223),^a that if precise acquaintance with a human being's character and all the motives that had an effect upon him were available, his acting would allow itself to be calculated as surely and precisely as an eclipse of the moon (*ibid.*, p. 177, *R.* p. 230),^b nonetheless, merely in virtue of this foundation of morals floating in the air, freedom is assumed, albeit in idea^c and as a postulate, by way of the famous inference: 'You can: for you ought.'^d But once we have recognized clearly that a thing *is* not and *cannot be*, then what is the use of all postulating? Then that which the postulate is grounded upon should rather be rejected, because it is an impossible presupposition, by the rule *a non posse ad non esse valet consequentia*,^e and by means of an apogogic proof, which in this case would overturn the categorical imperative. But instead of that one false doctrine is built upon the other here.¹⁰

Kant himself must have been silently conscious of the inadequacy of a foundation of morals that consists solely in a couple of wholly abstract and contentless concepts. For in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, where, as we have said, he generally sets to work less strictly and methodically and has also become bolder because of the fame he has now attained, the foundation of ethics very gradually alters its nature, almost forgets that it is a mere web of abstract concept-combinations, and seems to want to become more substantial. Thus, e.g. in that work p. 81 (*R.* p. 163)^f 'the moral law is, *as it were*, a fact of pure reason'. What are we supposed to think given this curious expression? Everywhere else what is factual is opposed to what can be cognized from pure reason. – Similarly, in the same work, p. 83 (*R.* p. 164),^g there is talk of 'a reason that determines the will *immediately*' and so on. – Here we should keep in mind that in the *Ground-work* he expressly and repeatedly refuses any anthropological grounding, any proof of the categorical imperative as a fact of consciousness, because that would be *empirical*. – However, because of such boldly made passing utterances Kant's successors went very much further along the same path.

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^a [Ak. 5: 94]

^b [Ak. 5: 99]

^c *idealiter*

^d *Du kannst: denn du sollst* [Schiller, *Die Philosophen* ('The Philosophers'), line 26)]

^e [From not being possible to not being is a valid inference]

^f [Ak. 5: 47]

^g [Ak. 5: 48]

Fichte (*System of Moral Philosophy*,^h p. 49) simply warns ‘that one should not be misled into explaining any further the consciousness that we have duties, or wanting to derive it from grounds apart from itself, because this would detract from the dignity and absoluteness of the law’. Fine excuse! – And then in the same work, p. 66, he says ‘The principle of morality^a is a thought that is grounded in the *intellectual intuition* of the absolute activity of intelligence and is the pure intelligence’s immediate concept of itself.’ What verbiage a windbag like this conceals his cluelessness behind! – Anyone who wishes to convince himself how completely the Kantians gradually forgot and ignored Kant’s original grounding and derivation of the moral law, should look up an essay that is very much worth reading in Reinhold’s *Contributions to an Overview of Philosophy at the Beginning of the 19th Century*, volume 2, 1801.^b There on pages 105 and 106 it is claimed ‘that in Kantian philosophy autonomy (which is one with the categorical imperative) is a fact of consciousness and cannot be traced back to anything else, seeing that it announces itself through an immediate consciousness.’ – Then it would be grounded anthropologically, and so empirically, which conflicts with Kant’s explicit and repeated explanations. – Yet in the same place, p. 108, it says: ‘Both in the practical philosophy of Criticism and in purified or higher transcendental philosophy as a whole, autonomy is that which grounds and is grounded through itself, that which is capable of and in need of no further grounding, the original as such, what is true and certain through itself, the primitively true, the primary thing *par excellence*,^c the absolute principle. – Therefore, if anyone suspects, demands or seeks a ground of this autonomy outside of itself, the Kantian school must believe of him that he is either lacking in moral consciousness* or that he fails to recognize it in speculation because of false basic concepts. The *Fichte–Schelling* school declares him afflicted by the lack of intellect^d which makes someone incapable of philosophizing and makes up the character of the unholy rabble and dull cattle, or of the *profanum vulgus* and *ignavum pecus*, as *Schelling* more considerably puts it.’^e How things stand with the truth of a doctrine that they try to force

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* ‘I thought as much! Having nothing rational left to reply, they swiftly shove it into one’s conscience’. Schiller [*Xenien*: ‘Die Philosophen’] (‘The Philosophers’), lines 27–8].

^h *System der Sittenlehre*

^a *Sittlichkeit*

^b [See p. 141, note c above]

^c *das prius κατ’ ἐξοχήν*

^d *Geistlosigkeit*

^e [‘common crowd’ and ‘idle herd’: see Horace, *Odes*, III, 1, 1 (also *Epistles*, I, 19, 19 (*servum pecus*); and Vergil, *Georgics* IV, 168]

through with such extravagances as these, everyone will feel. But meanwhile it is from the respect that they inspired that we must explain the truly childlike credulity with which the Kantians assumed the categorical imperative and proceeded at once to treat it as a settled matter. For since disputing a theoretical claim here could easily be confused with moral wickedness, each one, despite not becoming very much aware of the categorical imperative in his own consciousness, preferred not to have anything about that made public, because he silently believed that in others it would have a stronger development and come to the fore more clearly. For no one likes to turn the inside of his conscience outwards.

So more and more in the Kantian school practical reason with its categorical imperative appears as a hyperphysical fact, as a Delphic temple in the human mind, from whose murky sanctuary oracular utterances announce without fail not, unfortunately, what *will* happen, but what *ought* to happen. This *immediacy of practical reason*, once assumed, or rather surreptitiously claimed and forced through, was unfortunately transferred later to *theoretical* reason as well, especially since *Kant himself* had often said that the two were really just one and the same reason (e.g. Preface, p. xii, R. p. 8).^a For once it was conceded that with regard to the *practical* there was a reason that dictated from the oracle's tripod,^b they were very close to the next step of granting the same privilege to her sister, or strictly her consubstantial, *theoretical reason*, and declaring her to be a similarly immediate vassal of the empire, the advantage of which was as immeasurable as it was obvious. Now all philosophasters and phantasists, with F. H. Jacobi the denouncer of atheists in the lead, streamed towards this little gateway that had unexpectedly opened for them, to bring their bric-a-brac^c to market, or at least to rescue what was most cherished among the old heirlooms that Kant's doctrines threatened to smash. — Just as in the life of an individual *one* false step in youth often ruins the whole life, in the same way that single false assumption made by Kant, of a practical reason equipped with wholly transcendental credentials and making decisions 'without grounds', like the highest courts of appeal, had as a consequence that out of the strict, austere critical philosophy there sprang doctrines most heterogeneous to it, doctrines of a reason that at first just faintly 'detected', then clearly 'perceived', and finally had full-bodied 'intellectual intuition of' the 'supersensible', a reason whose 'absolute' utterances and revelations, i.e. those produced from the tripod, every phantasiist could now make out

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^a [Ak. 4: 391]

^b *ex tripode*

^c *Säckelchen*

his own reveries to be. This new privilege was openly^d used. Here lies the origin of that philosophical method that arose immediately after Kant's teaching, that consists in mystifying, impressing, deceiving, throwing sand in the eyes and being a windbag, the method whose epoch the history of philosophy will one day refer to under the title 'Period of Dishonesty'.^e For the *character of honesty*, of shared enquiry with the reader, which the writings of all previous philosophers have, has disappeared here: the philosophaster of this age wants not to inform, but to infatuate his reader – every page bears witness to that. *Fichte* and *Schelling* shine as heroes of this period – ultimately, though, someone unworthy even of them and ranking very much lower than these men of talent, the crude, mindless charlatan, *Hegel*. The chorus was made up of all sorts of philosophy professors, who with earnest expressions recited to their public stories of the infinite, the absolute and many other things of which they could know nothing at all.^f

Even a feeble joke had to serve as a step towards this *prophetic status of reason*: because the word *Vernunft* comes from *Vernehmen*,^a that was supposed to mean that reason was a faculty for *apprehending* that so-called 'supersensible' (cloud-cuckoo-land^b). The new idea found immeasurable acclaim, was repeated incessantly in Germany for 30 years with untold satisfaction, and was even made into the foundation stone of doctrinal edifices in philosophy – though it is as plain as day that while *Vernunft* certainly does come from *Vernehmen*, it does so only because it gives human beings the advantage over animals of not merely *hearing*, but also of *apprehending*, not what goes on in cloud-cuckoo-land, but what *one* rational human being says to *another*: that is *apprehended* by the other, and the capacity to do this is called *reason*. This is how all peoples, all ages, all languages have construed the concept of reason, namely as the faculty of general, abstract, non-intuitive representations, called *concepts*, which are designated and fixed by words: it is this faculty alone that a human being really has in advance of an animal. For these abstract representations, concepts,^c i.e. *summations*,^d of many particular things, condition *language* and by means of this condition *thought* proper, then by means of thought they condition the consciousness not only of the present, which animals also

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^d *redlich*

^e *Unredlichkeit*

^a [*Vernunft*: reason; *vernehmen*: apprehend, perceive, hear; no such derivation works in English]

^b νεφέλοκοκυγία, *Wolkenkuckuksheim*

^c *Begriffe*

^d *Inbegriffe*

have, but of the past and the future as such, and thus also clear memory, thoughtfulness, precaution, intention, the planned collaboration of many, the state, trade, arts, sciences, religions and philosophies, in short everything which so conspicuously differentiates the life of human beings from that of animals. For the animal there are only *intuitive* representations and hence only intuitive motives too: the dependence of its acts of will on motives is obvious as a result. This is no less the case with a human being, and he too is moved (presupposing his individual character) with the strictest necessity by motives – except that these are mostly not *intuitive* but *abstract* representations, i.e. concepts, thoughts, which nevertheless are the result of earlier intuitions, that is of influences upon him from outside. But this gives him a *relative* freedom, namely in comparison with the animal. For it is not the present environment that determines him, as it does the animal, but his own thought drawn from earlier experiences or acquired through teaching. Hence the motive that necessarily moves him is not there directly before the spectator's eyes along with the deed; instead he carries it around with him in his head. This gives not only his doing and dealing as a whole, but all his movements a conspicuously different character from that of an animal: he is drawn, as it were, by finer, invisible threads, and so all his movements bear the stamp of the planned and the intentional, which gives them an appearance of independence that distinguishes them conspicuously from those of an animal. But all these great differences depend entirely on the capacity for *abstract representations, concepts*. Thus this capacity is what is essential in *Vernunft*, i.e. the faculty that distinguishes the human being, called το λογισμον, το λογιστικον, *ratio, la ragione, il discorso, raison*, reason, discourse of reason. – If you ask me what the difference is between this and *Verstand*, νοϋς, *intellectus, entendement*, understanding, then I say: the latter is the cognitive faculty that animals also have, only in a different degree, whereas we have it in the highest – namely the immediate consciousness, preceding all experience, of the *law of causality*, which constitutes the form of the understanding itself and in which its whole essence consists. Upon it depends first and foremost intuition of the external world, for the senses solely by themselves are capable merely of *sensation*,^a which is far from being intuition, and is just its material: 'the intellect sees and the intellect hears, the others are deaf and blind'.^b *Intuition* arises through our immediately relating

^a *Empfindung*

^b νοϋς ὁρᾷ καὶ νοϋς ἀκούει τᾶλλα κωφὰ καὶ τυφλὰ (*mens videt, mens audit, cetera surda et coeca*) [Epicharmus, in Plutarch, *de sollertia animalium* (*On the Cleverness of Animals*), *Moralia* VII, ch. 3, 961a]

the sense organs' sensation to its *cause*, which through this very act of intelligence presents itself as *external object* in our form of intuition, *space*. And this shows that we are conscious of the law of causality *a priori* and that it does not stem from experience, seeing that experience itself, which presupposes intuition, does not become possible except through that law. Every superiority of the understanding, all prudence, sagacity, penetration, acumen, consists in the *perfection* of this wholly immediate grasp of *relations of causality*: for it is at the basis of all cognition of the *connection* of things, in the broadest sense of the word. Its sharpness and correctness makes one person *more understanding*, more prudent, more shrewd than the other. In all ages, by contrast, that human being has been called *rational* who does not allow himself to be guided by *intuitive* impressions, but rather by *thoughts and concepts*, and who as a result always sets to work reflectively, consistently and thoughtfully. Such action is everywhere called *rational action*. But this in no way implies righteousness and loving kindness. Rather, one can set to work extremely rationally, that is reflectively, thoughtfully, consistently, in a planned and methodical way, yet be following the most self-interested, most unjust and even the wickedest of maxims. That is why before Kant it never occurred to any human being to identify acting justly, virtuously and nobly with *acting rationally*: instead they distinguished the two entirely and kept them apart. The one rests on the *kind of motivation* involved, the other on the *difference in fundamental maxims*. Only after Kant, when virtue was supposed to spring out of pure reason, are virtuous and rational one and the same thing, in spite of the linguistic usage of all peoples, which is not accidental but is the work of universal and hence unanimous human cognition. Rational and vicious can combine very well, and indeed it is only through their combination that great, far-reaching crimes are possible. Irrational and noble-minded likewise co-exist very well: e.g. if today I give to someone in need something that I myself shall need even more urgently than him tomorrow – if I let myself be carried away and bestow on someone who is suffering hardship the sum that my creditor is waiting for, and the same in very many cases.

However, as we said, this elevation of reason into the source of all virtue, resting on the claim that as *practical reason* it issued unconditional imperatives in oracular fashion purely *a priori*, together with the false explanation of *theoretical reason* put forward in the *Critique of Pure Reason* – that it was a faculty essentially directed towards the *unconditioned* (something whose impossibility the understanding at the same time cognized *a priori*), and that this unconditioned formed itself into three alleged

ideas,^a – all this, as ‘an example whose vices are easy to imitate’^b led the babble-philosophers, Jacobi at their head, to that *reason that apprehends* the ‘supersensible’ immediately, and to the absurd assertion that reason was a faculty essentially aimed at things beyond all experience, and so at *metaphysics*, and that it immediately and intuitively cognized the ultimate grounds of all things and all existence, the supersensible, the absolute, the deity and such like. – If people had been willing to use their reason instead of deifying it, such assertions would have had to be countered long ago by the simple observation that, if a human being, enabled by a special organ for solving the riddle of the world, which constituted his reason, carried within himself an innate metaphysics that merely stood in need of development, then as complete a unanimity concerning the objects of metaphysics would have to prevail among human beings as concerning the truths of arithmetic and geometry. In that case it would become impossible for a great number of fundamentally different religions and an even greater number of fundamentally different philosophical systems to be present on earth; and furthermore, anyone who deviated from the rest in his religious or philosophical views would then have to be regarded at once as someone with whom things are not quite right. – The following simple observation would equally have had to force itself upon them. If we discovered a species of apes that intentionally fabricated *tools* for themselves, for fighting or building or any other use, then we would straight away grant them *reason*: by contrast, if we find wild peoples without any metaphysics or religion, of which there are some, it does not occur to us to deny them *reason* because of it. With his critique Kant confined the reason that could *prove* its would-be supersensible cognitions back within its limits; but he would have to have found *beneath* all critique this Jacobian reason that immediately *apprehends* the supersensible. Meanwhile in the universities innocent youths still continue to be taken in by this same kind of reason that is an immediate vassal of empire.

Note

If we want to get right to the bottom of the assumption of practical reason, we must pursue its family tree somewhat further up. There we find that it stems from a doctrine that Kant himself fundamentally refuted, but which, as a reminiscence of an earlier way of thinking, lies secretly, even unknown

^a [The Ideas of God, freedom and immortality: see *Critique of Pure Reason*, B395, note a (also A334–5/B391–2)]

^b *exemplar vitiis imitabile* [Horace, *Epistles* I, 19, 17]

to himself, at the basis of his assumption of a practical reason with its imperatives and its autonomy. It is rational psychology, according to which a human being is composed of two utterly heterogeneous substances, the material body and the immaterial soul. *Plato* is the first one who set out this dogma formally and sought to prove it as an objective truth. But *Descartes* took it to the peak of perfection and pushed it to the extreme, by providing it with the most precise exposition and scientific rigour. But in that very process its falseness came to light and was demonstrated successively by *Spinoza*, *Locke* and *Kant*. By *Spinoza* (whose philosophy principally consists in refuting the twofold dualism of his teacher)¹² in that, in direct and explicit opposition to the two substances of *Descartes*, he made it his main principle that 'thinking substance and extended substance are one and the same substance, comprehended now through one attribute, now through the other'.^a By *Locke*, in that he disputed innate ideas, derived all cognition from sensible cognition, and taught that it was not impossible that matter should think. By *Kant*, by means of the critique of rational psychology, as it stands in the first edition.^b *Leibniz* and *Wolff*, on the other hand, supported the wrong party: this earned *Leibniz* the undeserved honour of being compared with the great *Plato*, though the two are so heterogeneous. Here is not the place to expound all this. But according to this rational psychology the soul was something that originally and essentially had *cognition*, and was a willing being as well only as a consequence of that. So according to whether it set to work in these its fundamental activities purely on its own and unmixed with the body, or in connection with it, it had a higher and a lower cognitive faculty and also a faculty of will to which the same applied. In the higher faculty the immaterial soul was active entirely by itself and without cooperation from the body; then it was pure understanding^c and had to do solely with representations belonging to itself alone, which were thus not at all sensible, but purely intellectual,^d and also acts of will of the same sort, which collectively carried nothing sensible on them that originated from the body.^{*,13} Then it cognized nothing

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* *Intellectio pura est intellectio, quae circa nullas imagines corporeas versatur* [Pure understanding is understanding which has nothing to do with corporeal images], *Descartes, Meditations*, p. 188 [see VI, para. 2]

^a *substantia cogitans et substantia extensa una eademque est substantia, quae jam sub hoc, jam sub illo attributo comprehenditur* [*Ethics* II, prop. 7, scholium]

^b [See *Critique of Pure Reason*, 'The Paralogisms of Pure Reason', A341–405]

^c *intellectus purus*

^d *geistigen*

but abstract, universal entities,^a innate concepts, eternal truths,^b and so on. And in line with this its willing too stood under the influence only of such purely intellectual representations. In contrast, the *lower* cognitive and willing faculty was the work of the soul operating in union with, and closely connected with, the body and its organs, but compromised in its purely intellectual operation as a result. It was here that every *intuitive* cognition was supposed to belong, which was accordingly meant to be the unclear and confused cognition, while *abstract* cognition, consisting of abstracted concepts, was meant to be the clear sort! Then the will that was determined by such sensibly conditioned cognition was the lower and mostly bad one: for its willing was guided by stimulus from the senses, whereas the other was unalloyed willing guided by pure reason and belonging to the immaterial soul alone. The Cartesian de La Forge expounded this doctrine most clearly in his *Treatise on the human mind*:^c on p. 23 he writes: 'It is nothing but one and the same will, which is called sensuous desire when it is excited by judgments that arise in consequence of sense perceptions, and is called rational desire when the mind forms judgments concerning its own ideas, independently of the confused representations of the senses, which are the causes of its inclinations. . . . But what gave the occasion for regarding these two distinct propensities of the will as two distinct faculties of desire was that very often the one opposes the other, because the intention that the mind builds upon its own perceptions does not always agree with the thoughts put into the mind by the disposition of the body, by which it is often obliged to will one thing, whereas its reason would make it choose something else.'^d – It is from the obscurely conscious reminiscence of views such as this that *Kant's* doctrine of the *autonomy* of the will ultimately stems, which, as the voice of pure, practical reason, is law-giving for all rational beings as such and knows only *formal* determining grounds – in contrast with material ones which determine only the lower faculty of desire that the higher faculty works against.

^a *Abstrakta, Universalia*

^b *aeternae veritates*

^c *Tractatus de mente humana*

^d *Non nisi eadem voluntas est, quae appellatur appetitus sensitivus, quando excitatur per judicia, quae formantur consequenter ad perceptiones sensuum; et quae appetitus rationalis nominatur, cum mens judicia format de propriis suis ideis, independenter a cogitationibus sensuum confusis, quae inclinationem ejus sunt causae. — Id, quod occasionem dedit, ut duae istae diversae voluntatis propensiones pro duobus diversis appetitibus sumerentur, est, quod saepissime unus alteri opponatur, quia propositum, quod mens superaedificat propriis suis perceptionibus, non semper consentit cum cogitationibus, quae menti a corporis dispositione suggeruntur, per quam saepe obligatur ad aliquid volendum, dum ratio ejus eam aliud optare facit.*

Incidentally, the entire view that *Descartes* was the first to present in proper systematic fashion is in fact to be found already in Aristotle, who expounds it clearly enough in *On the Soul*,^c I, 1. Even Plato had prepared the way for it and given an indication of it in *Phaedo* (p. 188–9, Bip.).^f – On the other hand, in the wake of its Cartesian systematization and consolidation we find it become quite brazen one hundred years later, pushed to its extreme and taken in the direction of disappointment. Thus, as a résumé of the prevailing view at the time, *Muratori*, in *On the power of imagination*,^a chs. 1–4 and 13. There imagination, of which the whole intuition of the external world upon data of the senses is a function, is a purely material, bodily, cerebral organ (the lower cognitive faculty), and for the immaterial soul there remains only thinking, reflecting and deciding. – But then the matter becomes obviously questionable, and people must have felt that. For if matter is capable of this intuitive, highly complicated apprehension of the world, then it is hard to grasp why it should not also be capable of abstraction from this intuition and so of all the rest. Abstraction is patently nothing more than a discarding of determinations that are not needed for the purposes of each occasion, that is, individual and species differences, e.g. if I disregard what is peculiar to the sheep, the ox, the deer, the camel, etc., and so arrive at the concept *ruminant*. In this operation the representations forfeit their intuitive nature,^b and as merely abstract, non-intuitive representations, concepts, they are now in need of the word so that they can become fixed and handled in consciousness. – Still, for all that, we see Kant remaining under the sway of that old doctrine's aftermath when he puts forward his practical reason with its imperatives.¹⁴

§7 On the highest principle of Kantian ethics

Having examined the genuine *basis* of Kantian ethics in the previous paragraph, I now move on to the *highest principle* of morals which rests upon this foundation and is precisely connected, indeed organically fused with it. We recall that it runs: 'Act only in accordance with that maxim, of which you *can* at the same time *will* that it should become valid as a universal law for all rational beings.' – Let us ignore the point that it is a strange procedure to inform someone, who according to our assumption

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^c *de anima*

^f [Schopenhauer refers to the Bipont edition. See *Phd.* 65d–67d]

^a *Della forza della fantasia*

^b *Anschaulichkeit*

is seeking a law for his doing and refraining, that he should first seek one for the doing and refraining of all possible rational beings; and let us stick with the fact that the fundamental law put forward by Kant is obviously not yet the moral principle itself, but at best a heuristic rule for it, i.e. an indication as to where it is to be sought; not cash, then, as it were, but a secure order.^c But who is actually supposed to realize it? To speak the truth at once, a most unexpected paymaster here: none other than *egoism* – as I shall soon clearly show.

Thus only the maxim itself, of which I *can will* that all should act according to it, would be the real moral principle. My *being able to will* is the hinge around which the direction^d we are given turns. But what *can* I really will, and what not? Obviously, in order to determine what I can will in the aforementioned respect, I need a further regulative:^a and in this, for the very first time, I would have the key to that direction which is given to me like a sealed order. Now where is this regulative to be sought? – Impossible that it be anywhere else than in my *egoism*, this closest, constantly primed, original and living norm of all acts of will, that at least has the law of prior occupancy^b ahead of any moral principle. – The instruction – contained in *Kant's* highest rule – of how to find the real moral principle rests, then, on the tacit presupposition that I can will only *that* state in which I am best off. Since, when I ascertain some maxim that is to be followed universally, I must necessarily consider myself not always merely as the active, but also potentially^c and on some occasions as the passive party; my *egoism* decides for justice and loving kindness from this standpoint not because it desires to *practise* them, but because it desires to *receive* them and calls out, in the manner of that skinflint who had just heard a prayer about beneficence:

How wonderfully expounded, how great!
– I'd almost like to beg in the street.

This indispensable key to the direction that *Kant's* highest principle of morals consists in is something he cannot resist adding himself: yet he does not do this right away when he is presenting the principle, which could cause offence, but instead at a decent distance and deeper in the text. In this way it does not strike the eye that here it is really *egoism* that sits in

^c *Anweisung*

^d *Weisung*

^a *Regulativ*

^b *jus primi occupantis*

^c *eventualiter*

the judge's chair and gives the verdict, in spite of those elevated *a priori* institutions, and that the verdict is made to apply to the *active* side after it has decided from the point of view of the potentially *passive* side. Thus on p. 19 (R. p. 24)^d we find: 'that I *could* not *will* a universal law to lie, because then people would no longer believe me, or would pay me back in *like coin*'. – p. 55 (R. p. 49):^e 'The universality of a law that everyone could promise whatever he pleases with the intention of not keeping it would make the promise and the end one might have in it itself impossible; since *no one* would *believe*.' – On p. 56 (R. p. 50)^f in relation to the maxim of *unkindness* he says: 'A will that decided this would contradict itself, since *cases could occur* in which *he* would *need* the love and sympathy^g of others and in which, by such a law of nature arisen from his own will, he would rob himself of all *hope of the assistance he wishes for himself*.' – Likewise in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Pt. I, Bk. I, ch. 2, p. 123 (R. p. 192):^h 'If everyone looked with complete indifference on the need of others, and if *you belonged* to such an order of things, would you be in it with the assent of your will?' – The answer would be 'How rashly we sanction a law that is unfair to ourselves!'^a These passages adequately explain in what sense we are to understand the 'being able to will' in Kant's moral principle. But that this is truly the case with the Kantian moral principle is expressed most clearly in the *Metaphysical first principles of the doctrine of virtue*, §30:^b 'For everyone *wishes to be helped*. But if he lets his maxim of being unwilling to assist others become public, then everyone would *be authorized* to deny him assistance. Hence the maxim of self-interest would conflict with itself.' *Be authorized*, it says, *be authorized*! Here, then, it is expressed as clearly as it ever could be that moral obligation rests upon a presupposed *reciprocity*, and consequently is thoroughly egoistic and receives its interpretation from egoism, which, under the condition of reciprocity, prudently sees its way to a compromise. That would be appropriate for grounding the principle of union between states, but not for grounding the moral principle. So when in the *Groundwork*, p. 81 (R. p. 67),^c it says 'Act always on the maxim whose universality as a law you can at the same time will – is the sole condition under which a will can never be in conflict with itself' – the

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^d [Ak. 4: 403]^e [Ak. 4: 422]^f [Ak. 4: 423]^g *Theilnahme*^h [Ak. 5: 69]^a *Quam temere in nosmet legem sancimus iniquam!* [Horace, *Satires*, I, 3, 67]^b [Ak. 6: 453]^c [Ak. 4: 437]

true interpretation of the word *conflict* is that if a will had sanctioned the maxims of injustice and unkindness, it would later revoke them when it potentially became the *suffering party*, and would thereby *contradict* itself.

It is perfectly clear from this explanation that that fundamental Kantian rule is not, as he incessantly claims, a *categorical* imperative, but in fact a *hypothetical* one, tacitly based on the *condition* that the law I set up for my *acting*, when I elevate it to being *universal*, also becomes a law for my *suffering*, and under this condition, as the potentially *passive* party, I definitely *cannot will* injustice and unkindness. But if I remove this condition and, trusting perhaps in my superior intellectual and bodily strengths, think of myself always as the *active* and never as the *passive* party when it comes to the universally valid maxim to be chosen, then – supposing that there is no other foundation of morals than the Kantian – I can perfectly well will injustice and unkindness as a universal maxim, and regulate the world accordingly,

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upon the simple plan,
That they should take, who have the power,
And they should keep, who can.

Wordsworth^d

Thus the lack of real *grounding* for the Kantian highest principle of morals, which we expounded in the previous paragraph, is joined – contrary to Kant's explicit assurance – by its hidden *hypothetical* nature. Owing to this it is even based upon *egoism*, which is the secret interpreter of the direction given in it. Then a further point is that, considered merely as a formula, it is only a circumlocution, a dressing up, an oblique way of expressing the generally known rule 'Do not do to another what you do not want to be done to you',^a – if, that is, one repeats this without the 'do not's', thereby freeing it of the flaw of embracing only duties of right and not duties of love. For this is obviously the only maxim that I can will that all act in accordance with (with respect to my possibly *passive* role, hence to my *egoism*, of course). But this rule 'Do not do to another etc.' is in turn only a circumlocution itself, or, if you like, a premiss, of the proposition I put forward as the simplest and purest expression of the way of acting demanded by all moral systems: 'Harm no one; rather help everyone to

^d [*Memorials of a tour of Scotland*, XI, 'Rob Roy's Grave', slightly adapted. In a footnote Schopenhauer gives a German verse translation]

^a *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*

the extent that you can.’^b This is and remains the true pure content of all morals. But what is it grounded upon? what is it that lends force to this demand? That is the difficult old problem that once again lies before us today. For egoism cries out from the other side in a loud voice: ‘Help no one; rather harm everyone if it brings you advantage’;^c and malice provides the variant: ‘rather harm everyone to the extent that you can’.^d To set in opposition to this egoism, and to malice too, a champion who is equal and even superior to them – that is the problem of all ethics. ‘Rhodes is here, jump here!’^e –

159 Kant thinks, p. 57 (*R.* p. 60),^f to defend the moral principle he has put forward still further by venturing to derive from it that long familiar division of duties, which is indeed grounded in the essence of morality, into duties of right (also called perfect, unremitting or narrower duties) and duties of virtue (also called imperfect, wider or meritorious duties, but best of all duties of love). Only the attempt turns out so forced and manifestly poor, that it testifies powerfully against the highest principle that he puts forward. For duties of right are supposed to rest on a maxim whose opposite, taken as a universal law of nature, *cannot be thought* at all without contradiction; while duties of virtue rest on a maxim whose opposite one could *think* as a universal law of nature, but could not possibly *will*. – Now I ask the reader to consider that the maxim of injustice, force prevailing instead of right, which according to the above is supposed to be impossible even *to think*, really is the law that actually, as a matter of fact, prevails in nature, and not only in the animal world, but in the human world as well. Among the civilized peoples we have sought to forestall its disadvantageous consequences by instituting the state; but as soon as the latter, wherever and of whatever kind it is, is removed or eluded, that law of nature re-appears at once. It prevails enduringly between one people and another: it is well known that the customary jargon of justice between them is a mere official style of diplomacy – raw force decides. On the other hand, genuine, i.e. uncoerced, justice quite certainly proceeds from that law of nature, though always as an exception. Besides, in the examples with which he prefaces this division, Kant first gives evidence of duties of right (p. 53, *R.* p. 48)^a by way of the so-called duty to oneself not to end one’s life of one’s own free will if

^b *Neminem laede, imo omnes, quantum potes, juva*

^c *Neminem juva, imo omnes, si forte conducit, laede*

^d *Imo omnes, quantum potes, laede*

^e *Heic Rhodus, heic salta!* [From Aesop’s fable: the challenge to a boaster who claims to have made a prodigious jump once in Rhodes]

^f [Ak. 4: 424]

^a [Ak. 4: 421–2]

the troubles outweigh the agreeable things. So this maxim is supposed to be impossible even *to think* as a universal law of nature. I say that, since here the power of the state cannot intervene, precisely that maxim proves itself unhindered as an *actually pertaining law of nature*. For it is quite certainly a universal rule that a human being actually resorts to suicide as soon as the inborn, gigantically strong drive towards the preservation of life is decisively overpowered by the greatness of his sufferings: everyday experience shows this. But that there is any thought whatsoever that could restrain him from that, once the very powerful fear of death that is intimately linked to the nature of every living thing has proved itself incapable of doing so, a thought, that is, that would be stronger than that fear – is a risky presupposition, all the more so when we see that this thought is so hard to discover that moral theorists do not yet know how to state it definitively. At least we can be confident that arguments of the kind Kant offers against suicide on this occasion, p. 53 (R. p. 48), and also on p. 67 (R. p. 57),^b have never yet held back anyone who is tired of life, even for a moment. So, for the sake of the division of duties arising from the Kantian moral principle, a law of nature that indisputably actually pertains and operates every day is declared to be impossible *even to think* without contradiction! – I confess that it is not without satisfaction that I cast a glance forward from here to the grounding of morals that is to be put forward by me in the next Part, from which the division into duties of right and virtue (more correctly into justice and loving kindness) emerges entirely unforced, using a principle of separation that proceeds from the nature of the matter and that draws a sharp boundary by itself – so that my grounding of morals can in fact display the corroboration that Kant here claims, quite without foundation, for his.

§8 *On the derived forms of the highest principle of Kantian ethics*

As is well known, Kant presented the highest principle of his ethics again in a second, quite different manifestation, in which it is not, as in the first, expressed merely indirectly as an instruction as to how to seek it, but directly. He paves the way for this from p. 63 (R. p. 55)^c onwards, and does so through extremely strange, unnatural, even eccentric definitions of the concepts *end and means*, which can, however, be much more simply and correctly defined thus: *end* is the direct motive of an act of will, *means*

^b [Ak. 4: 421–2, 429]

^c [Ak. 4: 427]

the indirect motive ('the simple is the sign of the true'^a). But he smuggles through his strange definitions to reach the proposition: 'the human being, and in general every rational being, exists *as an end in itself*'. But I must say straight away that 'exist as an end in itself' is an impossible thought,^b a contradiction in terms.^c Being an end means being willed. Every end is such only relative to a will whose end it is, i.e., as we have said, whose direct motive it is. Only in this relation does the concept *end* have any sense, and it loses it as soon as it is torn away from there. But this relation, which is essential to it, necessarily excludes all 'in itself'. 'End in itself' is just like 'enemy in itself, friend in itself, uncle in itself, north or east in itself' and so on. At bottom, however, the 'end in itself' is in the same situation as the 'absolute ought': secretly, even unconsciously, the same thought lies at the bottom of them both: the theological. – Things are no better with the 'absolute worth'^d that is supposed to be allotted to the alleged but unthinkable *end in itself*. For I have to brand this too, without mercy, as a contradiction in terms. Every *worth* is a comparative quantity, and it stands moreover in a double relation: first, it is *relative*, in that it is *for* someone, and secondly, it is *comparative*, in that it is in comparison with something else according to which it is evaluated. Displaced from these two relations, the concept *worth* loses all sense and meaning. This is too clear to need any further discussion. – Just as those two definitions offend against logic, so too the proposition (p. 65, R. p. 56)^e that non-rational beings (animals, that is) are *things* and hence may be treated merely as *means* that are not at the same time *ends*, offends against genuine morals. In line with this it is said explicitly in the 'Metaphysical first principles of the doctrine of virtue', §16^f that: 'A human being can have no duty to any beings other than human beings'; and then in §17^g we find: 'Cruel treatment of animals is opposed to a human being's duty *to himself*; for it dulls his shared feeling of their suffering, and so weakens a natural disposition that is very serviceable to morality in one's relations *with other people*.' – So one should have compassion for animals merely as practice, and they are, as it were, the pathological phantom for practising compassion towards human beings. Together with the whole of non-Islamicized (i.e. non-Judaicized)¹⁵ Asia, I find such propositions outrageous and revolting. At the same time this

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^a *simplex sigillum veri*

^b *Ungedanke*

^c *contradictio in adjecto*

^d *absoluten Werth*

^e [Ak. 4: 428]

^f [Ak. 6: 442]

^g [Ak. 6: 443]

reveals again how thoroughly the philosophical morals here – which, as we expounded above, are merely dressed-up theological morals – depend on the biblical. Because (more on this later) Christian morals give no consideration to animals, they are at once free as birds in philosophical morals too, they are mere ‘things’, mere *means* to whatever ends you like, as for instance vivisection, hunting with hounds, bull-fighting, racing, whipping to death in front of an immovable stone-cart and the like – Bah! what a morals of pariahs, chandalas, and mlechchas^a – which fails to recognize the eternal essence that is present in everything that has life, and that shines out with unfathomable significance from all eyes that see the light of the sun. But that form of morals recognizes and gives consideration solely to its own valuable species, whose distinguishing mark, *reason*, is for it the condition on which a being can be the object of moral consideration.

On such a bumpy path, indeed by fair means or foul,^b Kant then reaches the second expression of the fundamental principle of his ethics: ‘So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means.’^c In a very artificial way and by a wide detour, what is said in this is: ‘Consider not yourself alone, but others as well’ and this in turn is a circumlocution for the proposition ‘Do not do to another what you do not want to be done to you’,^d which itself, as we have said, simply contains the premisses for the conclusion that is the ultimate true destination of all morals and all moralizing: ‘*Harm no one; rather help everyone to the extent that you can*’^e – a proposition that, like everything beautiful, looks at its best when naked. – Except that in that second moral formula of Kant’s the alleged duties to self are also included, intentionally and clumsily enough. I explained my position on these above.

163 It could, incidentally, be an objection to that formula that the criminal who is to be executed, with right and authority to boot, is treated as a means and not as an end, namely as an indispensable means towards preserving for the law, through its being carried out, the power to deter, which is what its end consists in.

Even though this second formula of Kant’s neither achieves anything for the *grounding* of morals nor is able to count as the adequate and immediate expression of its prescriptions – or highest principle – it does on the other

^a [Terms for those outside the Hindu caste-system]

^b *per fas et nefas*

^c [Ak. 4: 429]

^d *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*

^e *Neminem laede, imo omnes, quantum potes, juva*

hand have the merit of containing a fine psychological–moral insight,^f by marking out *egoism* with a highly characteristic distinguishing feature that deserves to be developed more closely here.¹⁶ This *egoism*, then, that we are all brimming with, and that we have invented *politeness* to conceal as our shameful part,^g peeps out from under all veils that are draped over it. It shows chiefly in our immediately seeking out in everything that comes before us, as if by instinct, simply a possible *means* to some one of the many *ends* we constantly have. At each new acquaintance our first thought is mostly whether the man could not become useful to us for something or other; and if he *cannot* do so, then for most people, as soon as they have convinced themselves of this, he himself is also *nothing*. It practically resides in the nature of the human glance to seek in everyone else a possible means to our ends, in other words an instrument: but whether the instrument, when used, will perhaps have to *suffer* more or less is a thought that follows on much later and often not at all. That we presuppose this mentality in others is shown by various things, e.g. that if we require information or advice from someone, we lose all trust in his utterances as soon as we discover that he might have any *interest* in the matter, even if only a small or remote one. For then we presuppose at once that he will make us a means to his ends, and so give us his advice in accordance not with his *insight*, but his *intent*^a – even if the former be ever so great and the latter ever so small. For we know all too well that a cubic inch of intent weighs more than a cubic yard of insight. Often in such a case, conversely, upon our question ‘What ought I to do?’ nothing whatsoever will occur to the other person except what we should do according to *his* ends: this is what he will answer then, directly and as though mechanically, without even thinking of *our* ends, his will dictating the answer immediately before the question could ever reach the forum of his real judgment; and thus he seeks to steer us in line with his ends without even becoming conscious of it, thinking instead that he is speaking out of his insight, when it is just his intent speaking out of him; indeed, he can even go so far as to tell a genuine lie without noticing it himself. So overwhelming is the influence of the will on cognition. Consequently not even the testimony of someone’s own consciousness has any force concerning the question whether he is speaking out of insight or out of intent; but for the most part the testimony of his interest does have such force. To take another case: someone being pursued by enemies and in fear of his life, if he meets a travelling salesman and asks

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^f *aperçu*^g *partie honteuse*^a *nicht seiner Einsicht, sondern seiner Absicht gemäß*

him about a side-road, may find that he counters him with the question 'Whether there is nothing among his wares that he could do with?' – This is not supposed to mean that it *always* happens like that: on the contrary, many a human being will immediately show real concern^b for the well-being and woe of the other, or, in Kant's language, regard him as end and not as means. But how near or far from each individual lies the thought of treating the other for once as an end, instead of as a means as usual – this is the measure of the great ethical distinction between characters, and what it all comes down to in the final instance. This will indeed be the true foundation of ethics, to which I shall not proceed until the following Part.

Kant, then, in his second formula, has marked out egoism and its opposite by a highly characteristic distinguishing feature – a highlight I have all the more pleasure in emphasizing and placing in clear view through elucidation, as I can, unfortunately, grant very little validity to the basis of his ethics apart from that.

165 The third and final form in which Kant presents his moral principle is the *autonomy* of the will: 'The will of every rational being gives universal law for all rational beings.' This follows, admittedly, from the first form. But from the present form it is supposed to emerge (according to p. 71, R. p. 60)^a that the specific differentiating sign of the categorical imperative is that, when willing from duty, the will *renounces all interest*. All previous moral principles supposedly came to grief 'because they always placed an *interest*, whether it be by way of constraint or attraction, at the basis of actions – *this might be one's own or another's interest*' (p. 73, R. p. 62)^b (also *another's* – I ask that this be noted). 'By contrast, a will giving universal law prescribes actions from *duty*, that are *based on no interest at all*.' But now I ask that we reflect on what that really means: in fact nothing less than a willing *without motive*, hence an effect without a cause. Interest and motive are interchangeable concepts: does not 'interest' mean *quod mea interest*, what concerns me? And is this not simply everything that stimulates and moves my will? What, then, is an interest but the influence of a motive on the will? Thus where a motive moves the will, it has an *interest*: but where no motive moves it, it can in truth no more act than a stone can leave its place without a push or a pull. I surely shall not need to demonstrate this to educated readers. But it follows from this that, since it must necessarily have a *motive*, every action necessarily presupposes an *interest*. Yet Kant

^b *wirklichen Antheil nehmen*

^a [Ak. 4: 431]

^b [Ak. 4: 433]

posits a second, entirely new kind of actions, which proceed without any interest, i.e. without motive. And these are supposed to be actions of justice and loving kindness! To refute this monstrous assumption would simply require tracing it back to its proper sense, which became obscured because of the play on the word *interest*. – Meanwhile Kant celebrates the triumph of his autonomy of the will by setting up a moral utopia, under the name of a *kingdom of ends*, which is populated exclusively by rational beings in the abstract,^c who one and all will continually without willing *anything* (i.e. without interest) – they will only this one thing: that everyone always wills according to a *single* maxim (i.e. autonomy). ‘It is difficult not to write a satire.’^d

But his autonomy of the will leads Kant on to something else with more troublesome consequences than this innocent little kingdom of ends, which we can calmly leave aside as totally harmless, and that is the concept of the *dignity of human beings*.^a Now this rests solely on their *autonomy*, and consists in the law that they ought to follow being given by themselves – thus they stand to the law in the same relation as constitutional subjects^b stand in to theirs. – That might at least stand as an ornament of the Kantian moral system. Only this expression ‘dignity of human beings’, once uttered by Kant, became a shibboleth for all clueless and thoughtless moral theorists, who hid their lack of any real basis of morals, or at least one that said anything at all, behind that imposing expression ‘dignity of human beings’, craftily counting on the fact that their reader too would be glad to see such a *dignity* applied to himself and so would be quite satisfied with it.* However, we wish to investigate this concept somewhat more closely, and examine it in respect of reality. – Kant (p. 79, *R.* p. 66)^c defines *dignity* as ‘an unconditional, incomparable worth’. This is an explanation that is imposing because of its elevated tone, so much so that one does not lightly dare to step up and investigate it closely, whereupon one would find that it too is but a hollow hyperbole in whose interior, like a gnawing worm, there nests a contradiction in terms.^d

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* The first person who explicitly and exclusively made the concept of ‘dignity of human beings’ the foundation stone of ethics and expounded it accordingly, seems to have been G. W. Block, in his *Neue Grundlegung zur Philosophie der Sitten* [*New Groundwork to the Philosophy of Morals*], 1802.

^c *in abstracto*

^d *Difficile est, satiram non scribere* [Juvenal, *Satires*, I, 30]

^a *Würde des Menschen*

^b *Unterthanen*

^c [Ak. 4: 436]

^d *contradictio in adjecto*

Every *worth* is the evaluation of a thing in comparison with another, thus a comparative concept and a relative one, and precisely this relativity makes up the essence of the concept *worth*. The Stoics (according to Diogenes Laertius, Book VII, ch. 106^e) already taught correctly: ‘that worth is the remuneration or equivalent value for something fixed by an expert; just as it is said that wheat is exchanged for barley plus a mule’.^f So a *non-comparative, unconditioned, absolute* worth, of the sort that *dignity* is supposed to be, is, like so much in philosophy, the task of a thought, set by words, that simply cannot be thought, any more than the highest number or the largest space.

Yet just where concepts are not present,
There a *word* inserts itself in time.^g

Here, then, in the case of the ‘dignity of human beings’ a highly welcome word was launched, in which every moral theory, spun out of all classes of duties and all cases of casuistry, found a broad foundation from which it could carry on preaching from on high with contentment.

At the end of his exposition (p. 124, *R.* p. 97)^h Kant says: It is quite beyond the capacity of human reason to explain ‘how *pure reason*, without other incentives that might be taken from elsewhere, can be of itself *practical*, that is, how the *mere principle of the universal validity of all its maxims* as laws, without any object of the will in which one could take some interest in advance, can of itself furnish an incentive and produce an interest that would be called purely moral, or, in other words, how pure reason can be practical, and all the pains and labour of seeking an explanation of it are lost.’ – Now one would think that if something whose existence is claimed cannot even be conceived in respect of its possibility, then it must be factually proved in its actuality: but the categorical imperative of practical reason is expressly *not* put forward as a fact of consciousness, or in any way grounded through experience. Rather, we are warned often enough that it is *not* to be sought on such an anthropological–empirical route (e.g. p. vi of the Preface, *R.* p. 5, and pp. 59–60, *R.* p. 52).^a In addition we are repeatedly assured (e.g. p. 48, *R.* p. 44)^b ‘that it cannot be made out

^e [See *Lives and Opinions of the Philosophers*, ‘Life of Zeno’]

^f τὴν δὲ ἀξίαν εἶναι ἀμοιβὴν δοκιμαστοῦ, ἣν ἂν ὁ ἐμπειρὸς τῶν πραγμάτων τάξῃ: ὁμοιον εἰπεῖν, ἀμείβεσθαι πυροῦς πρὸς τὰς σὺν ἡμιόνῳ κριθᾶς (*existimationem esse probati remunerationem, quamcumque statuerit peritus rerum; quod huiusmodi est, ac si dicas, commutare cum hordeo, adjecto mulo, triticum*)

^g [Goethe, *Faust* I, 1995–6]

^h [Ak. 4: 461]

^a [Ak. 4: 389, 425–6]

^b [Ak. 4: 419]

by means of any example, and so empirically, whether there is any such imperative at all'. And p. 49 (*R.* p. 45),^c 'that the reality of the categorical imperative is not given in experience'. – If we assemble all this, we could really start to suspect that Kant has got the better of his readers. Although this might be allowed and all right in relation to the German philosophical public of today, in Kant's day it had not yet given the same signal as it has since: and besides, ethics in particular was the theme least suited to a joke. So we must maintain the conviction that something that can neither be conceived *as possible* nor proved *as actual* has no certification of its existence. – But if we just try to grasp it purely in imagination and to picture a human being whose mind was possessed by an *absolute ought* that spoke purely in categorical imperatives, as if by a daemon who constantly demanded to control his actions contrary to his inclinations and wishes, then we behold in this no proper picture of human nature or the processes of our interior: but we do recognize an artificially constructed substitute for theological morals, to which it relates as a wooden leg does to a living one. 168

Our result, therefore, is that Kantian ethics, as much as all previous ethics, is devoid of any secure foundation. As I have shown in the examination of its *imperative form* presented right at the beginning, it is at bottom just a conversion of theological morals and a disguising of them in highly abstract formulae that appear to be discovered *a priori*. This disguising had to be all the more artificial and undetectable, since even Kant confidently deceived himself in the process, and really believed he could establish the concepts of the *command of duty* and the *law* – which obviously have any sense only in theological morals – independently of all theology, and ground them in pure cognition *a priori*: against which I have sufficiently proved that with him those concepts, devoid of any real foundation, float freely in the air. Towards the end the masked *theological morals* even unveils itself in his own hands, in the doctrine of the *highest good*, in the *postulates of practical reason* and finally in the *moral theology*. Yet all that did not deceive either him or the public about the true implication of the thing: instead, both rejoiced at seeing all these articles of faith now grounded by ethics (albeit only in idea^a and for practical purposes). For they naïvely took the consequence for the ground and the ground for the consequence, not seeing that all the alleged inferences from this ethics 169

^c [Ak. 4: 420]

^a *idealtiter*

already lay at its basis, as tacit and concealed, but unavoidably necessary presuppositions.

If, at the close of this pointed investigation, which has been demanding on the reader too, I might be allowed a humorous and indeed a frivolous comparison to lighten the mood: then I would compare Kant, in his self-mystification, with a man at a masked ball who woos a beautiful masked woman all evening in the vain hope of making a conquest, until she finally unmasks herself and reveals herself – as his wife.

§9 *Kant's doctrine of conscience*

The alleged practical reason with its categorical imperative is obviously most closely related to *conscience*, though it is essentially different from it *firstly* in that the categorical imperative, which gives an order, speaks before the deed, while conscience properly does not speak until afterwards. Before the deed it can at most speak *indirectly*, that is through the mediation of reflection, which holds before it the memory of previous cases where similar deeds have been subject to the disapproval of conscience. Even the etymology of the word *Gewissen*, conscience, seems to me to rest on this, because only what has already happened is *gewiss*, certain. In each one of us, even the best of human beings, there rise up impure, mean, wicked thoughts and wishes either from external occasion, from aroused affect or from internal annoyance: but he is not morally responsible for these and should not let them weigh on his conscience. For they display merely what *the human being in general*, not what *he* who is thinking them, would be capable of doing. For in his case there stand opposed to them other motives that merely do not enter consciousness at that moment simultaneously with the others, so that they could never become deeds: thus they are like an outvoted minority in a decision-making assembly. Everyone comes to know himself, just like others, empirically in his deeds, and only *they* weigh on the *conscience*. For they alone are not problematic, like thoughts, but on the contrary are *certain*, stay there unchangeably, and are not merely thought but *known*.^b It is just the same with the Latin *conscientia*: it is the Horatian 'be guilty over a fault, turn pale at a wrongdoing'.^c And just the same with συνειδησις.^a It is a human being's *knowing* about what he has done. Secondly, conscience always takes its material from experience,

^b *gewußt*

^c *conscire sibi, pallescere culpa* [after Horace, *Epistles*, I, 1, 61]

^a [knowledge, consciousness, conscience]

which the categorical imperative cannot do, since it is purely *a priori*. – Meanwhile we are entitled to presuppose that Kant's doctrine of conscience will throw light back upon that new concept that he introduced. The main presentation of it is to be found in the 'Metaphysical first principles of the doctrine of virtue', §13, and I *presuppose acquaintance* with these few pages in the critique that now follows.

The Kantian presentation of conscience makes an extremely imposing impression, so that people stood before it in reverential awe and dared to object to it all the less because they had to be afraid of seeing their theoretical objection confused with a practical one, and of passing for someone without conscience if they denied the correctness of the Kantian presentation. That cannot put me off, since here it is a matter of theory, not of practice, and the purpose is not preaching morals but a rigorous examination of the ultimate grounds of ethics.

First of all Kant makes use of *Latin, juridical expressions* throughout, though these seem poorly suited to reflect the most secret stirrings of the human heart. But he sticks to this language and the juridical presentation from start to finish: so it appears essential and proper to the topic. An entire law court is proceeding in the interior of the mind, with trial, judge, prosecutor, defence, verdict. If the inner process really were as Kant portrays it, we should have to wonder that any human being could be, I do not want to say so *bad*, but so *stupid*, as to act against conscience. For such a supernatural institution of a quite unique kind in our self-consciousness, such a vehmic court^b enveloped in the mysterious darkness of our insides, must inject into anyone a horror and fear of the gods, a fear that really would restrain him from seizing brief, fleeting advantages in the face of the prohibition and threat of such terrible supernatural powers revealed to him in such clear and close fashion. – In reality, though, we see to the contrary that the efficacy of conscience generally counts for so little that all peoples have been minded to come to its aid by means of positive religion, or in fact to replace it with religion completely. Also, with the nature of conscience like that, the present prize question would never have occurred to the Royal Society at all.

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On considering the Kantian presentation more closely, however, we find that its imposing effect is achieved primarily by Kant's assigning to moral self-judgment a form peculiar and essential to it, which it really is not, being instead a form that can fit it only in the same way that it fits any other rumination, quite alien to the properly moral, about what we have

^b *Vehmgericht* [a type of criminal tribunal in mediaeval Germany, which mostly operated in secret]

done and could have done otherwise. For not only will conscience that is obviously unguine, artificially constructed and based on mere superstition also occasionally take the same form, that of accusation, defence and judgment – e.g. if a Hindu reproaches himself for having given occasion for a cow to be murdered, or a Jew recalls that he smoked a pipe in the house on the Sabbath – but also the sort of self-examination that proceeds from no ethical viewpoint and is non-moral rather than moral in kind will even appear in such a form as well. Thus, e.g., when I have stood surety for a friend in good-natured but unreflective fashion, and now in the evening it becomes clear to me what a heavy responsibility I have placed upon myself and how it could easily come about that I incur great losses, which the ancient voice of wisdom ‘Pledges lead to perdition’^a now prophesies to me: then too the prosecutor appears in my interior and opposite him the advocate who seeks to mitigate my hasty act of standing surety by citing the pressure of circumstances and binding commitments and the innocuousness of the situation, even by praising my good nature, and finally the judge too, who mercilessly pronounces the verdict ‘Stupid venture!’ upon which I inwardly collapse.

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And as with the law court form Kant favours, so with the majority of the rest of his portrayal. E.g. what he says right at the start of his paragraph about conscience, as if peculiar to it, applies also to every scruple of quite another kind: this can quite literally be understood of the secret consciousness on the part of someone with investment income that his expenditure will far exceed the interest, and that the capital will be affected and must gradually melt away: ‘It follows him like his shadow when he plans to escape. He can indeed stun himself or put himself to sleep by pleasures and distractions, but he cannot help coming to himself or waking up from time to time; and when he does, he hears at once its fearful voice’ etc.^b – Then after he has portrayed the law court form as essential to the matter and so retained it from start to finish, he uses it for the purposes of the following finely framed sophism. He says ‘That to think of a human being *who is accused* by his conscience as *one and the same person* as the *judge* is an absurd way of representing a court, since then the prosecutor would always lose’, which he explains further in a very forced and unclear footnote. Now he concludes from this that, so as not to get into a contradiction, we must think of the inner judge (in the courtroom drama of conscience) as distinct from ourselves, as *another*, and think of him as a scrutinizer of hearts, as

^a ἐγγύα, παρά δ’ ἄτα [Delphic inscription; see Plato, *Charmides*, 165a]

^b [This and the next quoted passage Ak. 6: 438]

omniscient, as an imposer of all duty, and, being an executive power, as omnipotent: so now he is leading his reader on a completely smooth path from conscience to fear of the gods^a as its completely necessary consequence, secretly relying on the fact that the reader will follow him there all the more willingly given that his earliest education has made such concepts familiar to him, and in fact made them second nature. And so here Kant finds it child's play – yet he ought to have spurned that and been mindful of not only *preaching* honesty here, but *practising* it too. – I deny outright the proposition put forward above, on which all those inferences rest; in fact, I declare it an equivocation. *It is not true* that the prosecutor must lose every time if the accused and the judge are *one* person, at least not in the inner courtroom: in my example of the surety above, did the prosecutor lose? – Or, so as not to get into a contradiction, did we all along have to perform such a characterization^b here as well and objectively think of *another* as the one who pronounced judgment with that thunderous judgment 'Stupid venture!?' – perhaps an embodied Mercury? or a personification of the Cunning^c recommended by Homer (*Iliad*, 23, 313ff.) – and set out on the road to fear of the gods after all, albeit of heathen gods?

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The fact that in this exposition Kant neglects to present his moral theology, which is intimated here very briefly but nonetheless in its essentials, and brings it forward only as a subjectively necessary form, does not absolve him from the arbitrariness^d with which he constructs it, even if merely as subjectively necessary; because that happens by way of utterly unfounded assumptions.

This much is also certain: that the whole juridical–dramatic form in which Kant depicts conscience and which he retains throughout, right up to the end, as being one with the thing itself, so as ultimately to draw conclusions from it, is entirely non-essential to conscience and in no way peculiar to it. Rather it is a much more universal form which deliberation about every practical situation easily assumes, and which chiefly arises from the conflict of opposing motives that occurs in most such cases; reflective reason successively examines the weight of these motives, and in this it makes no difference whether these motives are moral or egoistic in kind, and whether it concerns a deliberation about what is still to be done or a rumination about what has already been carried out. Now if we strip Kant's exposition of the juridical–dramatic form it was arbitrarily given, then the

^a *Deisidämonie*

^b *Prosopopöia*

^c Μῆτις

^d *Willkürlichkeit*

174 nimbus cloud surrounding it also disappears together with its imposing effect, and what is left is simply that when we think over our actions, there occasionally comes over us a dissatisfaction with ourselves of a particular kind, having the peculiarity that it concerns not the consequence, but the action itself, and does not rest on *egoistic* grounds like all the others where we regret the imprudence of our doings, since here we are discontent precisely because we have acted *too* egoistically, *too* considerably towards our own well-being, *too* little towards that of others, or have even made our end the *woe* of others for its own sake, without any advantage to ourselves. That this is what we are discontent with ourselves about, and that we can grieve over sufferings that we have not *undergone* but rather *caused* – this is the naked fact, and no one will deny it. Later we shall investigate the connection of this with the sole confirmed basis of ethics. But, like a clever advocate, Kant has sought to make as much as possible out of the original fact, by embellishing and enlarging it, so as to have a really broad basis in place for his morals and his moral theology.

§10 *Kant's doctrine of the intelligible and empirical
character – Theory of freedom*

Now that, in the service of truth, I have made attacks on Kantian ethics which do not merely affect the surface of it, as previous ones did, but undermine it in its deepest ground, justice seems to me to demand that I do not leave it without recalling Kant's greatest and most brilliant service to ethics. This consists in the doctrine of the co-existence of freedom and necessity, which he produces first in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (pp. 533–4 of the first edition and pp. 561–82 of the fifth), but which he gives an even clearer exposition of in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (fourth edition pp. 169–79, *R.* pp. 224–31).^a

175 First *Hobbes*, then *Hume*, also *Holbach* in his *System of Nature*,^b and finally, most extensively and thoroughly *Priestley*, had all proved the complete and strict necessity of acts of will upon the occurrence of motives so clearly, and placed it so far beyond doubt, that it may be numbered among the fully demonstrated truths: so only ignorance and crudeness could continue to talk of a freedom in the individual actions of human beings, a *liberum arbitrium indifferantiae*.^c *Kant* too, following the irrefutable

^a [Ak. 5: 94–100]

^b *Syst[ème] d[e] la nat[ure]*

^c [free choice of indifference]

grounds of these predecessors, took the complete necessity of acts of will as a settled matter to which no further doubt could pertain – as is proved by all the passages in which he speaks of freedom only from the *theoretical* point of view. Yet it is also true that our actions are accompanied by a consciousness of independence and originality, through which we recognize them as our work, and everyone with unerring certainty feels himself as the real doer of his deeds and morally *responsible* for them. But now, since responsibility presupposes a possibility of having acted otherwise, and thus freedom in some way or other, so in the consciousness of responsibility there lies mediately also that of freedom. Now Kant's profound distinction between appearance and thing in itself, which is the innermost core of his philosophy and its chief merit, became the key, discovered at last, to the solution of this contradiction that arises out of the issue itself.

The individual – with his unalterable, inborn character, strictly determined in all its manifestations by the law of causality, which here, being mediated by the intellect, is called motivation – is only the *appearance*. The *thing in itself* that lies at the basis of this, situated as it is outside of space and time, is free from all succession and plurality of acts, one and unalterable. Its constitution *in itself* is the *intelligible character*, which, equally present in all the individual's deeds and stamped on them all like the cachet in a thousand seals, determines the *empirical character* of this appearance that manifests itself in time and the succession of acts, so that the appearance must show the constancy of a natural law in all its manifestations when they are called forth by motives; which is why all its acts follow strictly necessarily. In this way that unalterability, that unbending rigidity of every human being's empirical character which thinking heads had perceived since long ago (while others held that a human being's character can be transformed by representations of reason and moral admonitions) was traced back to a rational ground, and thus established for philosophy as well, bringing the latter in tune with experience. Thus philosophy was no longer ashamed of the folk wisdom that had long expressed that truth in the Spanish saying: *Lo que entra con el capillo, sale con la mortaja*, or: *Lo que en la leche se mama, en la mortaja se derrama*.^a

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This doctrine of Kant's of the co-existence of freedom and necessity I hold to be the greatest of all achievements of human profundity. It and the Transcendental Aesthetic are the two great diamonds in the crown of Kantian fame, which will never fade away. – As is well known, *Schelling*, in

^a ['What enters with the child's cap goes out again with the shroud' or 'What is sucked in with the mother's milk is poured out again into the shroud.']

his essay on freedom, gave an exposition of Kant's doctrine that was easier to grasp for many because of its lively colour and intuitive portrayal, which I would praise if *Schelling* had had the honesty to say that he was presenting Kant's wisdom here and not his own, which part of the philosophical public takes it for to this day.

But we can make this Kantian doctrine, and the essence of freedom, easier to grasp by placing them in connection with a universal truth whose most succinct expression I regard as one frequently uttered by the scholastics: *operari sequitur esse*,^b i.e. every thing in the world acts in accordance with what it is, in accordance with its constitution, in which all its manifestations are therefore contained potentially,^c while they occur actually^d when external causes call them forth, with that very constitution then making itself apparent. This is the *empirical character*, but on the other hand its inner ground, inaccessible to experience, is the *intelligible character*, i.e. the essence *in itself* of this thing. In this a human being is no exception to the rest of nature: he too has his enduring constitution, his unalterable character, which, however, is thoroughly individual and different in the case of each. This is *empirical* for our apprehension, but precisely because
 177 of that it is merely *appearance*: what it may be in respect of its essence in itself, by contrast, is called the *intelligible character*. His collective actions, determined by motives in respect of their external constitution, can never turn out otherwise than in accordance with this unalterable individual character: as someone is, so must he act. Thus positively only *one* action is possible for the given individual in any single given case: *operari sequitur esse*. Freedom belongs not to the empirical but solely to the intelligible character. The *operari*^a of a given human being is determined necessarily from outside by motives, from inside by his character: therefore everything he does happens necessarily. But in his *esse*,^b that is where freedom resides. He could have *been* another: and in what he *is* resides blame and merit. For everything that he does issues spontaneously from that as a mere corollary. – In Kant's theory we are really rescued from the basic mistake that deposited necessity in the *esse* and freedom in the *operari*, and brought to the recognition that things are precisely the other way round. For that reason, though the moral responsibility of a human being does not relate directly and ostensibly to what he does, it does relate fundamentally to

^b [acting follows from being]

^c *potentiâ*

^d *actu*

^a [acting]

^b [being]

what he *is*; since, with this presupposed, his doings, once motives appear, were never able to come out differently from the way they did come out. Yet however strict the necessity is with which the deeds are called forth, given his character, it will still never occur to anyone, even someone who is convinced of this, to wish to exculpate himself by that means and pass the blame on to the motives: for he clearly recognizes that here, with regard to the matter and the occasion, in other words objectively,^c a completely different action, even an opposed one, was perfectly possible and would indeed have come about, *if only he had been another*. But that he is such a one and no other, as emerges from his action – that is what he feels responsible for. Here, in his *esse*, lies the place where the sting of conscience hits home. For conscience is in fact just acquaintance with one's own self, arising out of one's own actions and growing ever more intimate. Hence it is properly the *esse* that is assigned the blame by conscience, albeit on the occasion of the *operari*. Since we are conscious of *freedom* only through the mediation of *responsibility*, the former must reside where the latter resides: that is, in the *esse*. The *operari* falls to necessity. However, as with others, we come to know ourselves too only *empirically*, and have no cognition *a priori* of our character. What is more, we originally harbour a very high opinion of our character, as the saying 'everyone is presumed good until the contrary is proven'^a applies before the inner court of law^b as well.

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Note¹⁷

Anyone who is capable of recognizing what is essential in a thought in its wholly different guises will see with me that this Kantian doctrine of the intelligible and empirical character is an insight, raised into abstract clarity, that Plato had already – although, because he had not recognized the ideality of time, he could present it only in temporal form, and so merely mythically and in relation to metempsychosis. But this recognition of the identity of the two doctrines is greatly clarified by the elucidation and exegesis of the Platonic myth that Porphyry provided, with so much lucidity and precision that in him the correspondence with the abstract Kantian doctrine stands out unmistakably. This description from a text by him that is no longer extant, in which he writes a precise and specific commentary on the myth at issue here, the one given by Plato in the second half of

^c *objective*

^a *quisque praesumitur bonus, donec probetur contrarium*

^b *foro*

the tenth book of the *Republic*, is preserved extensively^c by Stobaeus in the second book of his *Eclogues*, ch. 8, §§37–40, a passage that is well worth reading on that account. As a sample, I quote the short §39 here, so that the engaged reader will be stimulated to pick up Stobaeus himself. Then he will recognize at once that that Platonic myth can be regarded as an allegory of the great and profound knowledge that Kant put forward, in its abstract purity, as the doctrine of the intelligible and empirical character, and that consequently it was already arrived at in essence millennia before by Plato, and in fact that it reaches even further, as Porphyry is of the opinion that Plato took it over from the Egyptians. It is at any rate already present in the doctrine of metempsychosis in Brahmanism, from which in all likelihood the wisdom of the Egyptian priests stems. The aforementioned §39 goes as follows:

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‘For the whole of what Plato means seems to be as follows: before they fall into bodies and different life-forms souls have the freedom to choose this or that other life-form, which they then implement through the appropriate life and the body that is suitable to that soul (for it is up to the soul to choose the life of a lion or a man). But that freedom is removed as soon as the soul has attained one or other of the life-forms. For once they have descended into the bodies and from being free souls have become the souls of animals, they have only that freedom that is appropriate to the constitution of that life-form, so that in some cases they are highly intelligent and mobile, as with human beings, in others not at all mobile and simple, as in almost all other animals. But the kind of freedom depends on the constitution in each case, in that on the one hand they are moved by themselves, but on the other hand are led by the desires that arise from their constitution.’^a

^c *in extenso*

^a Τὸ γὰρ ὅλον βούλημα τοιοῦτ' ὅρκειν εἶναι τὸ τοῦ Πλάτωνος· ἔχειν μὲν τὸ αὐτεξούσιον τὰς ψυχὰς, πρὶν εἰς σώματα καὶ βίους διαφόρους ἐμπεσεῖν, εἰς τὸ ἢ τοῦτον τὸν βίον ἔλθῃν, ἢ ἄλλον, ὃν, μετὰ ποιᾶς ζωῆς καὶ σώματος οἰκεῖν τῇ ζωῇ, ἐκτελέσειν μέλλει. (καὶ γὰρ λέοντος βίον ἐπ' αὐτῇ εἶναι ἔλθῃν, καὶ ἀνδρός). Κἀκεῖνο μέντοι τὸ αὐτεξούσιον, ἅμα τῇ πρὸς τινα τῶν τοιούτων βίων πτώσει, ἐμπεπόδισται. Κατελθοῦσαι γὰρ εἰς τὰ σώματα, καὶ ἀντὶ ψυχῶν ἀπολύτων γεγυῖαι ψυχὰς ζώων, τὸ αὐτεξούσιον φέρουσι οἰκεῖν τῇ τοῦ ζώου κατασκευῇ, καὶ ἐφ' ὧν μὲν εἶναι πολύνουν καὶ πολυκίνητον, ὡς ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων, ἐφ' ὧν δὲ ὀλιγοκίνητον καὶ μονότροπον, ὡς ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων σχεδὸν πάντων ζώων. Ἡρτῆσθαι δὲ τὸ αὐτεξούσιον τοῦτο ἀπὸ τῆς κατασκευῆς, κινούμενον μὲν ἐξ αὐτοῦ, φερόμενον δὲ κατὰ τὰς ἐκ τῆς κατασκευῆς γιγνομένας προθυμίας. (*Omnino enim Platonis sententia haec videtur esse: habere quidem animas, priusquam in corpora vitaeque certa genera incidant, vel ejus vel alterius vitae eligendae potestatem, quam in corpore, vitae conveniente, degant (nam et leonis vitam et hominis ipsi licere eligere); simul vero, cum vita aliqua adepti, libertatem illam toli. Cum vero in corpora descenderint, et ex liberis animalibus factae sint animalium animae, libertatem, animalis organismo convenientem, nanciscuntur; esse autem eam alibi valde intelligentem et mobilem, ut in homine; alibi vero simplicem et parum mobilem, ut fere in omnibus ceteris animalibus. Pendere autem hanc libertatem sic ab animalis organismo, ut per se quidem moveatur, juxta illius autem appetitiones feratur.*)

§II Fichte's *ethics as enlarging mirror for the faults of Kant's*

Just as in anatomy and zoology some things are not so obviously seen by the student in specimens and products of nature as they are in engravings, which represent them with a certain exaggeration, so, to anyone on whom the worthlessness^a of the Kantian basis of ethics may not have fully dawned after the critique given in the paragraphs above, I can recommend *Fichte's System of Moral Philosophy*^b as a means to making this recognition clearer. 180

For just as in the old German puppet shows the emperor or other hero was always given the fool^c as companion, who repeated everything the hero had said or done afterwards in *his* own manner and with exaggeration, so behind the great Kant there stands the originator of the *Science of Knowledge*,^d more properly the *Science of Nulledge*.^e This man had a plan, as regards the German philosophical public wholly fitting and approvable, to provoke attention by means of a philosophical mystification, so as to ground the welfare of himself and of his own as a consequence, and he carried it out superbly by *outdoing Kant* in all aspects, coming on as his living superlative, and really bringing about a caricature of the Kantian philosophy by enlarging its most salient parts; and he achieved this in ethics as well. In his *System of Moral Philosophy* we find the categorical imperative grown into a despotic imperative: the absolute ought, lawgiving reason and the command of duty have developed into a *moral fate*,^f an unfathomable necessity that the human race act strictly in accordance with certain maxims (pp. 308–9). A great deal must hang on these maxims, judging by the moral institutions, though we never really discover *what*, and instead see simply that, as there dwells in bees a drive collectively to build cells and a hive, so in human beings there is allegedly supposed to reside a drive collectively to stage a great, strictly moral world-comedy, in which we are mere puppets on strings and nothing besides – only with the significant difference that the beehive really comes into existence, whereas rather than the moral world-comedy a highly non-moral one is in fact staged instead. And so we see the imperative form of Kantian ethics, the moral law and the absolute ought taken further here, until they have turned into

^a *Nichtigkeit*

^b *System der Sittenlehre*

^c *Hanswurst*

^d *Wissenschaftslehre*

^e *Wissenschaftsleere* [*Leere*: emptiness, vacuity]

^f *Fatum*

181 a *system of moral fatalism*, whose exposition at times crosses over into the comical.*

182 If a certain moral pedantic quality is detectable in *Kant's* ethics, in *Fichte* the most ridiculous moral pedantry gives plentiful material for satire. One should read, e.g., pp. 407–9, the resolution of the well-known casuistic example where one of two human lives must be lost. Again we find all of Kant's mistakes intensified to the superlative degree; e.g. p. 199: 'Acting in accordance with the drives of sympathy, compassion, *loving kindness*, is absolutely not moral, rather it is as such against morals!' – p. 402: 'The incentive to readiness for service must never be an unreflective good-heartedness, but rather the clearly thought out end of promoting the causality of reason as much as possible.' – But from among these pedantries Fichte's real philosophical rawness peeps out conspicuously – as is to be expected from a man whose teaching never left him any time for learning – when he seriously propounds the *liberum arbitrium indifferetiae*,^a and secures it upon the meanest of grounds (pp. 160, 173, 205, 208, 237, 259, 261). – Anyone who is not yet wholly convinced that a motive, despite having its effect through the medium of cognition, is a cause like any other, and thus carries with it the same necessity of consequence as any other, so that all human actions follow strictly necessarily – is still raw philosophically and not yet trained in the elements of philosophical knowledge. The insight into the strict necessity of human actions is the dividing line that separates philosophical minds from the rest: and having arrived at this line, Fichte showed clearly that he belonged to the rest. The

* I wish to grant space only to a few passages in corroboration of what has been said. p. 196: 'The moral drive is absolute', it demands 'pure and simple, without any end outside itself.' – p. 232: 'Now, as a consequence of the moral law, the empirical being in time ought to become a precise copy of the original I.' – p. 308: 'The whole human being is a vehicle of the moral law.' – p. 342: 'I am only an instrument, a mere tool of the moral law, and not in any way an end.' – p. 343: 'Everyone is an end as a means to realizing reason: this is the ultimate final end of his existence: he is there solely for that, and if that should not happen, then he need not be at all.' – p. 347: 'I am a tool of the moral law in the sensible world!' – p. 360: 'It is a decree of the moral law to nourish the body, to promote its health: it is evident that this is permitted to happen in no sense and to no other end than that of being an *efficient tool* for promoting the *end of reason*.' – (Compare p. 371) p. 376: 'Every human body is a tool for promoting the end of reason: so the highest possible fitness for purpose of every tool must be an end for me: accordingly I must maintain care for everyone.' – This is his derivation of loving kindness! – p. 377: 'I am able and permitted to care for myself solely because and in so far as I am *a tool of the moral law*.' – p. 388: 'Defending a victim of persecution with danger to one's own life is an absolute obligation: – as soon as human life is in danger, you no longer have the right to think of the safety of your own.' – p. 420: 'There is simply no view of my fellow human being in the realm of the moral law, other than that he is a *tool of reason*.'

^a [free choice of indifference]

fact that, pursuing Kant's trail, he then says things that stand in direct contradiction to the above passages only goes to show, as do so many other contradictions in his writings, that, being someone who was never in earnest about enquiry into the truth, he had no firmly established basic conviction – which was totally unnecessary for his ends anyway. Nothing is more ridiculous than the fact that people acclaimed this man for the strictest consistency, genuinely mistaking his pedantic tone and way of demonstrating trivial things in an expansive manner for such consistency.

The most complete development of this *system of moral fatalism* of Fichte's is to be found in his last work, *The Science of Knowledge presented in its general outline*,^b Berlin 1810, which has the advantage of being only 46 duodecimo pages thick and yet containing his whole philosophy in a nutshell^c – a reason for recommending it to all those who regard their time as too precious to have to be squandered on this man's grander productions, which are composed with the breadth and tediousness of Christian Wolff and really intended to deceive rather than instruct the reader. So in this short text it says on p. 32: 'Intuition of a sensible world existed only so that in this world the I could become visible to itself as *subject to absolute ought*.'^d – On p. 33 comes 'the ought of the visibility of the *ought*', and on p. 36 'an *ought* of the recognition that I *ought*'. – So, as 'an example whose vices are easy to imitate',^e this is where the *imperative form* of Kant's ethics led immediately after *Kant*, with its unproven *ought* offering itself as a comfortable fixed place to stand.^a

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Incidentally, everything I have said here does not overturn Fichte's contribution, which consists in having obscured, and indeed supplanted, Kant's philosophy, this late masterpiece of human profundity, for the nation from which it emerged, by using a windbag's superlatives, extravagances, and the nonsense, presented under the mask of profound sense, of his 'basis of the entire science of knowledge' – and thereby showing the world irrefutably what the competence of the German philosophical public is. For he had it play the role of a child from whose hand one wheedles a precious gem while offering him a toy from Nuremberg in exchange. The fame he achieved in this way still lives on today, on credit, and still today *Fichte* is always named alongside Kant as another of that kind¹⁸ (Hercules and an ape!^b),

^b *Die Wissenschaftslehre in ihrem allgemeinen Umriss dargestellt*

^c *in nuce*

^d *absolut sollendes*

^e *exemplar vitii imitabile*

^a πού στω

^b Ἡρακλῆς καὶ πίθηκος – i.e. *Hercules et simia!*

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and indeed frequently placed above him.* And then his example has also called forth that successor in the art of philosophical mystification of the German public, who is animated by the same spirit and crowned with the same success, whom everyone knows, and to speak about whom in full this is not place – although their respective opinions are still expounded at length and with breadth by the philosophy professors and seriously debated as if they really had to do with philosophy.¹⁹ We owe it to Fichte, then, that illuminating documents are in existence to be reviewed one day before the seat of judgment of posterity, which in almost all ages has had to be for genuine merit what the Last Judgment is for the holy.

* I corroborate this from a passage in the very latest philosophical literature. Mr. Feuerbach, a Hegelian (*c'est tout dire* [that says it all]) makes himself understood as follows in his book *P. Bayle, Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Philosophie* [*P. Bayle: A Contribution to the History of Philosophy*], 1838, p. 80: 'But more sublime than Kant's are Fichte's ideas, which he expressed in his *Moral Philosophy* and scattered through his remaining writings. Christianity has nothing by way of sublimity that it could place beside the ideas of *Fichte*.'

III GROUNDING OF ETHICS

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§12 *Requirements*

Thus even *Kant's* grounding of ethics, taken for sixty years as its firm foundation, sinks before our eyes into the deep abyss of philosophical errors that is perhaps impossible to fill – proving itself to be an inadmissible assumption and a mere dressing up of theological morals. – That previous attempts to ground ethics can give even less satisfaction is something I am, as previously stated, entitled to presuppose as known. They are mostly unproven assertions plucked out of the air, and at the same time, like *Kant's* grounding itself, artificial subtleties that demand the finest of distinctions and rest on the most abstract of concepts, laboured combinations, heuristic rules, principles that balance on the point of a needle, and maxims on stilts, looking down from whose heights one can no longer see real life and its tumult. So they are certainly very well suited to resound in the lecture halls and provide practice in acumen: but nothing of this sort can produce the call to just and beneficent deeds^a that is nonetheless present in every human being, nor can it balance out the strong impulses towards injustice and harshness, nor lie at the basis of the reproaches of conscience – wanting to reduce these to the infringement of such hair-splitting maxims can serve only to make the latter ridiculous. So, if we take the matter seriously, artificial concept-combinations of that kind can never contain the true impulse^b towards justice^c and loving kindness.^d This, moreover, must be something that requires little reflection, still less abstraction and combination, that is independent of education of the intellect and appeals to everyone, even the least refined human beings, rests merely on intuitive grasp and presses itself upon us immediately from the reality of things. So long as ethics can show no foundation of this kind, it may debate and parade about in the lecture halls: real life will pronounce its scorn. So I must give ethical theorists the paradoxical advice first to look around a little in human life.

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§13 *Sceptical viewpoint*

Or, from looking back over the attempts to find a secure basis for morals made in vain for more than two thousand years, might it perhaps become

^a *Rechtthun und Wohlthun*

^b *Antrieb*

^c *Gerechtigkeit*

^d *Menschenliebe*

apparent that there is no natural morals independent of human institutions, and that it is rather an artefact through and through, a means invented for better restraining the selfish and wicked human race, and that consequently it would collapse without the support of the positive religions, because it has no inner authentication and no natural basis? The judiciary and the police cannot reach everywhere: there are offences whose detection is too difficult, and indeed some whose punishment is awkward, so that here public protection deserts us. In addition civil law can enforce at most justice, but not loving kindness and beneficence, because of course in this case everyone would want to be the passive party and no one the active. This has occasioned the hypothesis that morals rests on religion alone, and that both have it as their end to complement the necessary insufficiency of the institutions of state and legislation. In that case there could not be
 187 a natural morals, i.e. one grounded solely upon the nature of things or of human beings: which would explain why philosophers have striven to no avail in seeking its foundation. This opinion is not without plausibility: the Pyrrhonists already propounded it: 'Nothing is good by nature, nor bad,

but these things are decided by the judgment of human beings

according to Timon',^a Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors*^b XI. 140; and in more recent times too, distinguished thinkers have committed themselves to it. Thus it deserves a careful examination, even though it would be more convenient to push it aside with an inquisitorial look askance into the conscience of those in whom such a thought was capable of arising.

One would be caught in a great and very juvenile error if one believed that all just and legal actions of human beings were of moral origin. Rather, between the justice that human beings practise and genuine honesty of the heart there is for the most part a relationship analogous to that between expressions of politeness and genuine love of one's neighbour, which unlike the former overcomes egoism not for the sake of appearance, but really. The rectitude of character^c that is worn everywhere for show and wishes

^a οὔτε ἀγαθόν τί ἐστι φύσει, οὔτε κακόν,

ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων ταῦτα νόῳ κέκριται,

κατὰ τὸν Τίμωνα (*neque est aliquod bonum naturâ, neque malum, 'sed haec ex arbitrio hominum dijudicantur'*, – *secundum Timonem*).

^b *adv[ersos] Math[ematicos]*

^c *Rechtlichkeit der Gesinnung*

to be elevated above all doubt, together with the high indignation that is roused by the slightest hint of suspicion in this regard and is ready to turn into the fieriest anger – only someone inexperienced and simple will take all of this straight off at face value, and as the effect of a tender moral feeling or conscience. In truth the universal rectitude that is practised in human intercourse and asserted in the form of rock-steady maxims rests chiefly on two external necessities: firstly on the order of law,^a by means of which public force protects the rights of each of us, and secondly on the familiar necessity of a good name, or civic honour, for getting on in the world. By means of this the footsteps of each one are placed under the scrutiny of public opinion, which with merciless strictness never forgives even a single step out of line in this respect, but holds it as an indelible stain against the guilty party until his death. It is actually wise in this: for it proceeds on the basic principle *operari sequitur esse*^b and thus in the conviction that the character is unalterable, with the result that whatever someone has done once he will inevitably do again in exactly the same circumstances. So these are the two guardians that watch over public rectitude and without which, to put it bluntly, we would be in a bad way, especially with regard to possession, this matter of great importance in human life, around which its doing and dealing chiefly revolves. For the purely ethical motives for honesty, assuming they are present, can find application to civil possession for the most part only by way of a long detour. That is, it is solely to *natural* right that they can relate directly and immediately, and to *positive* right only mediately, in so far as the former lies at its basis. But natural right attaches to no property other than that gained by one's own labour; when it is seized, the powers expended on it by their owner are seized along with it and are thus stolen from him. – I reject unconditionally the theory of preoccupation,^c though I cannot go into its refutation here.* – Now admittedly any possession grounded on positive right, albeit through many intermediary links, ought to rest directly on the natural right to property as its primary source. But how far our civil possessions lie in most cases from that original source of the natural right to property! Mostly they have a connection with it that is very hard to show or cannot be shown at all: our property is inherited, acquired by marriage, won in the lottery, or, if

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* See *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, §62, pp. 396ff., and vol. 2, ch. 47, p. 682. [Hübscher SW 2, 396–8; SW 3, 684–5]

^a *gesetzliche Ordnung*

^b [acting follows from being]

^c *Präoccupationstheorie*

not that, then gained not through proper work with the sweat of our brows, but by prudent thought and ideas that occur to us, e.g. in the business of speculation, and indeed occasionally through stupid ideas, which the god Success^d has crowned and glorified by way of chance. It is genuinely the fruit of real work and labour in the smallest number of cases, and even then this is often only an intellectual labour, as that of advocates, doctors, 189 civil servants, teachers, which in the eyes of the unrefined human being appears to cost little effort. It requires significant education to recognize the ethical right in the case of all such possession as this, and hence to deem it something that comes from a purely moral impulse. – Consequently many, on the quiet, regard the property of others as possessed only by positive right. So if they find the means to take it away from them by using or simply by circumventing the law, they feel no scruples: for to them it seems as though the others are losing it in the same way that they previously acquired it, and so they consider their own claim just as well founded as that of the previous possessor. From their standpoint the right of the stronger has had its place taken in civil society by the right of the cleverer. – Meanwhile *the rich man* is often really someone of unimpeachable rectitude, because he is attached to a rule with all his heart and upholds a maxim on whose observance rests everything he possesses, together with the great deal of advantage he has over others because of it, with the result that he binds himself in full earnest to the principle ‘to each his own’^a and does not deviate from it. There is in fact an *objective* devotion of this kind to trust and faith, with the resolve to hold them sacred, which rests simply on the fact that trust and faith are the basis of all free intercourse among human beings, and of good order and secure possession, so that they are often to the benefit of *us ourselves* and in this respect must be upheld even by making sacrifices – just as one also *spends* something on a good piece of land. Yet as a rule one will find honesty grounded in this way only in well-to-do people, or at least those who apply themselves to lucrative earnings, most of all among business people, who have the clearest conviction that trade and exchange have their indispensable support in mutual trust and credit; which is why the honour of businessmen is a quite special honour.²⁰ – The *poor man*, by contrast, who has come off badly in the matter and sees himself condemned to want and hard labour because of the inequality of 190 possession, while others live in excess and idleness before his eyes – he will hardly acknowledge that this inequality has as its basis a corresponding

^d *der Deus Eventus*

^a *suum cuique*

inequality of deserts and honest earnings. But if he does not acknowledge this, then from where is he supposed to gain the purely ethical impulse to honesty that is to restrain him from stretching out his hand after the excess of others? Mostly it is the order of the law that holds him back. But if once the rare opportunity comes along where, secure against the effects of the law, he could by a single deed shrug off the pressing burden of want, which the sight of others' excess makes even more strongly felt, and place *himself* in possession of the enjoyments he has so often envied, what then will stay his hand? Religious dogmas? Belief is seldom so strong. A purely moral motive for justice? Maybe in individual cases: but in the great majority it will be simply care for his good name, his civil honour, which greatly concerns even the lowly man, the evident danger of being expelled forever for the sake of such a deed from the great freemason's lodge of honest people, who follow the law of rectitude and have divided property among themselves in accordance with it over the whole of the earth, the danger of being a pariah for civil society his whole life long in consequence of a single dishonest action, someone no one trusts any longer, whose company everyone flees, and for whom all advancement is therefore cut off, i.e., in a word, 'A fellow who has stolen' – and one whom the saying fits: 'He who once steals is a lifelong thief'.²¹

These, then, are the guardians of public rectitude: and anyone who has lived and kept his eyes open will concede that by far the greatest portion of honesty in human intercourse is owed solely to them, and indeed that there is no lack of people who hope to remove themselves even from *their* watchfulness, and who thus regard justice and honesty merely as a shop-sign, a flag under whose protection one carries out one's privateering with all the more success. So we do not have to rise up at once in holy zeal and put on armour as soon as a moral theorist raises the problem whether all honesty and justice might perhaps be at bottom merely conventional, and then, pursuing this principle further, is at pains to reduce all the rest of morals to more distant, mediate, but ultimately egoistic grounds – as Holbach, Helvetius, d'Alembert and others of their time attempted to do with such acuteness. That is actually true and correct of the greatest portion of just actions, as I have shown above. That it is also true of a considerable portion of actions done from loving kindness is subject to no doubt, as they often occur out of ostentation, very often out of a belief in a future recompense^a which is going to be paid out squared or fully cubed, and they admit of further egoistic grounds too. But it is just as certain that

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^a *Retribution*

there are actions of disinterested loving kindness^b and freely willed justice.^c Evidence of these – to appeal not to facts of consciousness but only those of experience – are the individual but undoubted cases where not only punishment by law, but also discovery, and even any hint of suspicion were totally excluded, and yet a rich man had what belonged to him given back by a poor man: e.g. where something lost and found, or something deposited by a third party who had then died, was brought to its owner, or where something secretly left with a poor man by someone fleeing the country was faithfully kept and returned. There are cases of this sort, without doubt: but the surprise, the emotion, the respect with which we greet them shows clearly that they belong to the unexpected things, the rare exceptions. There are in fact truly honest people – just as there actually are four-leaved clovers – but Hamlet speaks without hyperbole when he says: ‘To be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man pick’d out of ten thousand.’^a – Against the objection that ultimately what lay at the ground of the actions mentioned above were religious dogmas, and therefore a concern for punishment and reward in another world, cases could also easily be demonstrated where those who performed them adhered to no religious belief, something that is by no means so rare as the public acknowledgement of this fact.

192 In opposition to the *sceptical viewpoint* people appeal first of all to *conscience*. But doubts are raised against the natural origin of *this* too. At least, there is also a spurious conscience,^b which is often confused with it. The regret and anxiety that many a person feels over what he has done is often at bottom nothing other than fear of what can happen to him in return. The infringement of external, arbitrary and even absurd regulations torments many a person with inner reproaches, quite in the manner of conscience. Thus it sits heavily on the heart of many a sanctimonious^c Jew that, although in the second book of Moses, ch. 35, 3, it says: ‘Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day’, he nonetheless smoked a pipe at home on Saturday. A secret self-reproach gnaws at many a nobleman or officer when there is any reproach that he has not properly lived up to the fool’s code that people call knightly honour: this goes so far that, if put in a position where it is impossible to keep his word of honour, or merely to satisfy the said code in cases

^b *uneigennützigter Menschenliebe*

^c *freiwilliger Gerechtigkeit*

^a [Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, scene 2. Schopenhauer quotes in English and gives a footnote translation]

^b *conscientia spuria*

^c *bigotten*

of conflict, many a man of this rank will shoot himself dead. (I have experienced both.) And yet the same man will break his word every day with a light heart, just as long as the shibboleth 'honour' has not been added. In general every inconsistency, every thoughtlessness, every action contrary to our projects, principles, convictions, of whatever kind they may be, and indeed every indiscretion, every failure, every blunder niggles us afterwards in silence and leaves behind its barb in our heart. Many a person would be amazed if he saw what his conscience, which presents itself to him in such stately fashion, is genuinely composed of: $\frac{1}{5}$ fear of human beings, $\frac{1}{5}$ fear of the gods, $\frac{1}{5}$ prejudice, $\frac{1}{5}$ vanity and $\frac{1}{5}$ habit: so that he is basically no better than the Englishman who said plainly: 'I cannot afford to keep a conscience.' – Religious people, of any faith, very often understand by *conscience* nothing other than the dogmas and prescriptions of their religion and the self-examination they practise in relation to them: and the expressions *pressure of conscience* and *freedom of conscience*^d are also taken in this sense. The theologians, scholastics and casuists of mediaeval and later times took it in just this way: all that someone knew of the Church's regulations and prescriptions, together with the undertaking to believe and observe it, made up his *conscience*. There was accordingly a doubting conscience, an opining conscience, an erring conscience and many others like this, and to correct them one would take counsel with one's conscience. How little the concept of conscience itself is fixed, like other concepts, by its object, how differently it has been construed by different people, how wavering and unsure it appears among writers, can be seen briefly from *Stäudlin's History of the Doctrine of Conscience*.^a All this is not apt to make the reality of the concept credible, and hence it occasioned the question whether there actually is a genuine inborn conscience. I have already had occasion to present my concept of conscience briefly in §10 in the context of the doctrine of freedom, and will return to it further below.

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Though these collective sceptical worries by no means suffice to negate the existence of all genuine morality, they do suffice to limit our expectations of the moral disposition in human beings and so of the natural foundation of ethics; since so much that is attributed to this demonstrably stems from other incentives, and consideration of the moral corruption of the world is enough to show that the incentive to good cannot be a very strong one, also because it often has no effect even where the motives that

^d Gewissenszwang und Gewissensfreiheit

^a *Geschichte der Lehre vom Gewissen*

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oppose it are not strong – though here the individual difference of characters asserts its full force. Meanwhile recognition of that moral corruption is made more difficult by the fact that its manifestations are restrained and concealed by the order of law and by the necessity of honour, and then again by politeness. Finally, a further point is that in education we mean to enhance the morality of our pupils by representing rectitude and virtue to them as the maxims universally followed in the world: but then if experience later teaches them otherwise, and often to their great cost, the discovery that the teachers of their youth were the first to deceive them can have a more detrimental effect on their own morality than if these teachers themselves had given them the first example of open-heartedness and honesty and said without pretence: ‘The world is in a state of wickedness, human beings are not what they ought to be; but let it not lead you astray, and be better.’ – All of this, as we have said, makes our recognition of the actual immorality of the human race more difficult. The state, this masterpiece of the self-comprehending, rational, accumulated egoism of all, has placed the protection of the rights of everyone in the hands of a force^a which, infinitely superior to the power^b of each individual, compels him to respect the rights of all others. Thus the boundless egoism of almost all, the malice of many, the cruelty of some cannot emerge: compulsion has bound all. The illusion that springs from this is so great that in individual cases where the power of the state is unable to protect or is evaded, and we see the insatiable greed, the mean thirst for money, the deeply concealed falseness, the spiteful malice of human beings appearing, we often recoil in horror and raise a hue and cry, thinking we have been attacked by a monster never before seen; but without the compulsion of laws and the necessity of civil honour such occurrences would be the order of the day. You have to read crime stories and descriptions of states of anarchy to recognize what, in a moral respect, the human being really is. The thousands that swarm around one another before our eyes in peaceful intercourse should be regarded as just so many tigers and wolves whose bite is made safe by a strong muzzle.²² So if we think of the power of the state being removed, i.e. that muzzle being thrown off,²³ anyone with insight recoils trembling before the scene that we could then expect; and in so doing he lets us know how little effect he basically trusts religion, conscience or the natural foundation of morals, whatever it might be, to have. But precisely at that point, counter to those liberated immoral powers,^c

^a *Gewalt*^b *Macht*^c *unmoralischen Potenzen*

the true moral incentive in human beings would also show its efficacy without disguise and consequently be most easily capable of recognition. And at the same time the unbelievably great moral difference between characters would emerge unveiled and be found to be just as great as the intellectual difference between heads – which is certainly saying a great deal.

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It will perhaps be objected to me that ethics does not have to do with the way human beings actually act, but is the science which indicates the way they *ought* to act. But this is precisely the principle that I deny, having sufficiently shown in the critical part of this essay that the concept *ought*, the *imperative form* of ethics, has validity only in theological morals, and outside of that loses all sense and meaning. By contrast, I set ethics the task of clarifying and explaining ways of acting among human beings that are extremely morally diverse, and tracing them back to their ultimate ground. So there remains no other path to the discovery of the foundation of ethics than the empirical one, namely investigating whether there are any actions at all to which we must assign *genuine moral worth* – which will be the actions of freely willed justice, pure loving kindness and real noble-mindedness.^d These, then, are to be regarded as a given phenomenon that we have to explain correctly, i.e. trace back to their true grounds, and so demonstrate the particular incentive that moves a human being on each occasion to this kind of action, a kind specifically differentiated from all others. This incentive, together with receptivity for it, will be the ultimate ground of morality,^a and the cognition of it the foundation of morals.^b This is the modest path towards which I direct ethics. If this path – containing no construction *a priori*, no absolute legislation for all rational beings in the abstract^c – strikes anyone as not being sufficiently distinguished, infallibly authoritative^d and academic, he can go back to the categorical imperatives and the shibboleth of the ‘dignity of human beings’, to the hollow flights of rhetoric, the fantasies and soap bubbles of the schools, to principles that experience pronounces its scorn upon at every step, and which no human being outside the lecture halls knows anything of, nor has ever felt. By contrast, experience stands by the side of the foundation of morals that emerges on my path, daily and hourly submitting its silent testimony on its behalf.

^d *Edelmuth*

^a *der letzte Grund der Moralität*

^b *Fundament der Moral*

^c *in abstracto*

^d *vornehm, cathedralisch*

§14 *Anti-moral* incentives*

The chief and fundamental incentive in a human being, as in an animal, is *egoism*, i.e. the urge to existence and well-being.^a The German word *Selbstsucht*, selfishness, carries with it a false connotation of illness.^b The word *Eigennutz*, self-interest, designates egoism in so far as it stands under the guidance of reason, which enables it, through reflection, to pursue its ends *according to a plan*; thus, although one can call animals egoistic, one cannot call them self-interested. So I wish to retain the word *egoism* for the more universal concept. – This *egoism*, both in an animal and in a human being, is linked in the most precise way with his innermost core and essence, and indeed is properly identical with it. So all his actions, as a rule, spring from egoism and the explanation of any given action is always to be sought in it first of all; and likewise the calculation of all means by which one attempts to steer a human being towards any goal is also entirely grounded upon it. *Egoism* is, by its nature, boundless; the human being unconditionally wills to preserve his existence, wills it unconditionally free from pains, including also from all lack and privation, wills every pleasure of which he is capable, and even seeks where possible to develop new capacities for pleasure. Everything that opposes the striving of his egoism arouses his unwillingness,^c anger, hatred: he will seek to destroy it as his enemy. He wills where possible to take pleasure in everything, to have everything; but, since this is impossible, at least to master everything: ‘All for me and nothing for the others’ is his favourite saying.²⁵ Egoism is colossal: it towers above the world. For if the choice were given to any individual between his own destruction and that of the world, I do not need to say where it would land in the great majority. In line with this, each one makes himself the mid-point of the world, relates everything to himself, and with everything that happens at all, e.g. the greatest alterations

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* I permit myself the compound formation of this word [*antimoralisch*] though it contravenes the rules, as ‘anti-ethical’ [*antiethisch*] would not be indicative here. But the use of ‘*sittlich* and *unsittlich*’ [customary and non-customary] that has now become fashionable is a poor substitute for ‘*moralisch* and *unmoralisch*’ [moral and immoral]: first, because ‘*moralisch*’ is a scientific concept, to which as such a Greek or Latin designation is fitting, on grounds that can be found in my main work, vol. 2, ch. 12, pp. 134ff. [Hübscher *SW* 3, 133–6]; and secondly, because ‘*sittlich*’ is a weak and bland expression, hard to distinguish from ‘*sittsam*’ [decent, demure], whose popular name is ‘*zimperlisch*’ [prim and proper]. We must make no concession to Germanomania [*Deutschtrümelei*].²⁴

^a *Drang zum Daseyn und Wohleyn*

^b [*Sucht* typically means addiction or mania, and carries this connotation into the compound *Selbstsucht*]

^c *Unwillen*

in the destiny of peoples, he will relate it first to *his* interest, however small and indirect it may be, and think about that ahead of everything. There is no greater contrast than that between the high and exclusive concern^d that each one has for his own self and the indifference with which all others as a rule regard this very self; as he does theirs. It even has its comical side, seeing the countless individuals each of whom, at least in a practical respect, takes himself alone as *real* and regards the others in some measure as mere phantoms. This ultimately rests on the fact that each is given to himself *immediately*, while the others are given only *mediately*, by way of the representation of them in his head: and immediacy asserts its right. For in consequence of the subjectivity essential to each consciousness, each is for himself the whole world: that is, everything objective exists only mediately, as mere representation of the subject, so that everything constantly depends upon self-consciousness. Each carries in himself, as his representation, the single world that he is really acquainted with and that he knows about, and he is therefore its centre. For this reason each is all in all to himself: he finds himself as the owner of all reality and nothing can be more important to him than himself. But whereas in its subjective aspect his self presents itself with this colossal magnitude, in the objective aspect it shrinks down to almost nothing, namely around $1/1000\ 000\ 000$ of humanity now living. Meanwhile he knows with complete certainty that this very self that is important above all else, this microcosm, of which the macrocosm, or his whole world, appears as the mere modification or accident, must be extinguished in death, which for him is thus synonymous with the extinction of the world. These, then, are the elements from which egoism grows on the basis of the will to life, and constantly lies like a wide trench between one human being and another. If someone really leaps over it to help another, then it is like a miracle^a that provokes astonishment and wins applause.²⁶ Above, in §8, when discussing the Kantian moral principle, I had the opportunity to describe how egoism shows itself in everyday life, where, despite the politeness we stick in front of it as a fig-leaf, it constantly peeps out from some corner or other. For politeness is the conventional and systematic denial of egoism in the small things of everyday intercourse and is freely acknowledged hypocrisy: yet it is encouraged and praised, because what it hides, egoism, is so loathesome that people do not want to see it although they know it is there – just as we wish to know that repulsive objects are at least covered by a curtain. Since egoism pursues its ends

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^d *Antheil*^a *Wunder*

unconditionally – when it is not opposed either by external force, in which is to be included all fear, be it of terrestrial or super-terrestrial powers, or by the genuine moral incentive – the ‘war of all against all’^b would be the order of the day among the countless throng of egoistic individuals, to the detriment of all. So reflective reason very quickly invents the institution of the state, which, arising out of mutual fear of mutual force, forestalls the disadvantageous consequences of universal egoism as far as this can happen on the *negative* path. By contrast, where those two powers^c opposing it do not achieve efficacy it will show itself at once in all its fearsome magnitude, and the phenomenon will not be a pretty one. Being minded to characterize the magnitude of egoism at a single stroke, to express the strength of this anti-moral power without long-windedness, and so seeking after some really emphatic hyperbole, I finally arrived at this one: many a human being would be ready to strike another dead simply to smear his boots with the other’s fat. But a scruple still remained in me as to whether it really is a hyperbole. – *Egoism*, then, is the first and principal power,^a though not the only one, that *the moral incentive* has to combat. Here we see already that the latter, in order to take the field against such an opponent, must be something more real than a hair-splitting sophistry^b or an aprioristic soap bubble. – Meanwhile, the first thing in war is to reconnoitre the enemy. In the battle before us *egoism*, as the chief power on its side, will deploy itself pre-eminently against the virtue of *justice*, which on my view is the first and really the proper cardinal virtue.

By contrast, the virtue of *loving kindness* will be opposed more often by *ill-will*^c and *spitefulness*.^d So let us next consider the origin and the gradations of these. *Ill-will* is very common, indeed almost normal, in its lower degrees, and it easily reaches the higher degrees. *Goethe* is quite right to say that in this world indifference and aversion are most truly at home (*Elective Affinities*,^e Pt. I, ch. 3). It is very fortunate for us that prudence and politeness cast their cloak over this and do not let us see how universal mutual ill-will is, and how the ‘war of all against all’ is carried on at least in thought. Occasionally it comes to light, however, e.g. in malicious slander, which is so common and so merciless; but it becomes fully visible in outbursts of anger which are for the most part

^b *bellum omnium contra omnes* [Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I, 13]

^c *Potenzen*

^a *Macht*

^b *Klügelei*

^c *Uebelwollen*

^d *Gehässigkeit*

^e *Wahlverwandschaften*

many times in excess of what provokes them, and could not come forth so strongly had they not, like gunpowder in the rifle, been compressed as long-harboured hatred brooding on the inside. – Ill-will arises in large measure from the unavoidable collisions of egoism that occur at every step. It is also provoked objectively too, by the sight of the vices, failings, weaknesses, follies, deficiencies and imperfections of all kinds which to a greater or lesser extent everyone displays to others at least sometimes. Things can go so far here that to some, particularly in moments of hypochondriacal depression, the world may perhaps appear as a cabinet of caricatures when considered from the aesthetic angle, from the intellectual angle as a mad house, and from the moral as a hostel for scoundrels. If such a depression becomes persistent, misanthropy sets in. – Finally, a chief source of ill-will is *envy*; or rather it itself *is* ill-will already, aroused by the happiness, possessions or advancement of others. No human being is entirely free of it, and Herodotus (III, 80) already said that ‘envy is inborn in the human being from the beginning’.^{f,27} And yet the degrees of it are very different. It is at its most irreconcilable and poisonous when directed at personal qualities, because here no hope is left for the envier, and simultaneously at its most base, because he hates what he ought to love and honour; but thus it is, as Petrarch complains:

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Those seem to be envied most of all
Who soar aloft on their own strong wings
And escape the common cage of all.^a

More extensive considerations about envy can be found in the second volume of *Parerga*, §114.²⁸ – In a certain respect the opposite of envy is *schadenfreude*.^b Yet feeling envy is human, while taking pleasure in *schadenfreude* is devilish. There is no more unfailing sign of a thoroughly bad heart and profound moral worthlessness than a streak of pure, heartfelt *schadenfreude*. One should avoid for ever anyone in whom one has perceived it. ‘This man is black of heart, of him beware, O Roman.’^c – Envy and *schadenfreude*

^f φθονος ἀρχηθεν ἐμφυεται ἀνθρώπῳ (*invidia ab origine homini insita est*) [Histories]

^a

Di lor par più, che d'altri, invidia s'abbia
Che per se stessi son levati a volo,
Uscendo fuor della commune gabbia

[*Trionfo del Tempo* (*The Triumph of Time*), V, 91ff. Schopenhauer provides a German verse translation in a footnote]

^b [Malicious joy in the misfortune of others: the word is treated in what follows as an English word borrowed from the German]

^c *Hic niger est, hunc tu, Romane, caveto* [Horace, *Satires*, I, 4, 85]

are in themselves merely theoretical: practically they become malice and cruelty. Egoism can lead to crimes and misdeeds of all kinds: but the harm and pain of others that is thereby caused is merely a means for egoism, not an end, and thus occurs only accidentally. For malice and cruelty, by contrast, the sufferings and pains of others are an end in themselves and achieving them is a pleasure. For that reason they constitute moral badness raised to a higher power. The maxim of the most extreme egoism is: 'Help no one; rather harm everyone if it brings you advantage'^a (thus still conditional). The maxim of malice is: 'Harm everyone to the extent that you can'.^b As *schadenfreude* is simply theoretical cruelty, so cruelty is simply practical *schadenfreude*, and the latter will appear as the former as soon as the opportunity comes along.

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To demonstrate the specific vices that spring from the two fundamental powers we have adduced would be in place only in a fully worked out ethics. Such an ethics would derive from *egoism*, for instance, greed, gluttony, lust, self-interest, meanness, covetousness, injustice, hard-heartedness, pride, haughtiness etc. – but from *spitefulness* malevolence, envy, ill-will, malice, *schadenfreude*, prying curiosity, calumny, insolence, petulance, hatred, anger, treachery, guile, vengefulness, cruelty etc. – The first root is more animal,^c the second more devilish. The predominance of the one or the other, or of the moral incentive that is still to be demonstrated below, provides the main line in the ethical classification of characters. No human being is entirely without something of all three.

With this I bring to an end the admittedly frightful troop review of the anti-moral powers, which is reminiscent of the princes of darkness in *Milton's Pandemonium*.^d However, it was part of my plan to take this murky side of human nature into account first, a feature in which my path certainly diverges from that of all other moral theorists and becomes similar to that of *Dante*, who leads us first into hell.^e

From the survey of the anti-moral powers we have given here it becomes clear how hard the problem is of discovering an incentive that could move a human being to a way of acting opposed to all those inclinations that are deeply rooted in his nature, or one that would give a sufficient and non-artificial account of that way of acting, if it were perhaps given in experience. The problem is so hard that, in order to solve it for humanity at large, people

^a *Neminem juva, imo omnes, si forte conducit, laede*

^b *Omnes, quantum potes, laede*

^c *thierisch*

^d [In *Paradise Lost*, I, lines 756ff.]

^e ['Hell' (*Inferno*) is the first part of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*]

have everywhere had to call on the help of machinery from another world. They would point to gods, whose will and command the way of acting required here was supposed to be, and who gave emphasis to this command by way of punishments and rewards, either in this world or in another where we were supposed to be transported by death. Supposing that belief in a doctrine of this kind should take root universally, which is certainly possible by means of very early impression, and supposing – something that is much more difficult and can show much less corroboration in experience – that it produced the intended effect; then, although legality of actions would indeed be set in train by that means, even beyond the limit that justice and the police are able to reach, still everyone feels that it would by no means be what we properly understand by morality of character.^a For obviously all actions called forth by motives *of such a kind* would always be rooted in sheer egoism. How is talk of disinterestedness^b supposed to be possible where reward entices me or threatened punishment deters me? A reward in another world that we firmly believe in is to be regarded as an exchange that has been set up, completely secure but at very long sight. The promise of contented beggars that is so common everywhere, that in that other world the gift will be returned to the giver a thousandfold, may move many a skinflint to plentiful alms that he doles out in satisfaction as a good investment of money, firmly convinced that he will at once be resurrected as an immensely rich man in the other world as well. – Perhaps for the great mass of the people things must rest at impulses of this kind: and accordingly the different religions, which are after all the metaphysics of the people, hold these up before them. But here we should note that we are at times just as much in error concerning the true motives of our own doings as we are concerning those of others: so certainly many a person, being able to account for his noblest actions only in terms of motives of the above kind, is nonetheless acting on much nobler and purer incentives that are also much harder to make clear, and is really doing out of immediate love of his neighbour what he knows how to explain solely through the bidding of his god. Philosophy, by contrast, searches here as everywhere for the true, ultimate elucidation of the problem before it, one grounded in the nature of human beings and independent of all mythical interpretations, religious dogmas and transcendent hypostases, and demands to see it confirmed in outer or inner experience. But the task before us is a philosophical one, so we have to ignore entirely all solutions to it that are conditioned by

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^a *Moralität der Gesinnung*

^b *Uneigennützigkeit*

203 religions, which I have recalled here merely in order to bring to light the great difficulty of the problem.

§15 *Criterion of actions of moral worth*

Now the first thing should be to settle the empirical question whether actions of freely willed justice and disinterested loving kindness, which can go as far as magnanimity and noble-mindedness, occur in experience. However, this question unfortunately cannot be answered purely empirically, because in experience only the *deed* is given every time, while the *impulses* are not open to view: so the possibility always remains that an egoistic motive might have had an influence on a just or good action. Here, in a theoretical investigation, I do not wish to employ the inadmissible trick of shoving the matter into the reader's conscience. But I believe there will be very few who doubt, and who do not from their own experience have the conviction, that we often act justly, simply and solely so that no injustice happens to another, and indeed that there are people in whom, as it were, the principle of having justice done to the other is *inborn*, who therefore never intentionally step too close to anyone, who do not seek their own advantage unconditionally, who are vigilant in the case of mutually undertaken obligations not only that the other *contributes* his due, but also that he *receives* his due, sincerely not wanting anyone who deals with them to be short changed. These are the *truly honest people*, the few just ones^a among the countless unjust.^b But there are such people. Similarly, I think, it will be conceded to me that many a person helps and gives, contributes and sacrifices, without having any further intention in his heart than that the other, whose distress^c he sees, should be helped. And that Arnold von Winkelried, when he cried "Comrades, dear confederates, care for my wife and child"^d and then embraced as many enemy spears as he could, might have had a self-interested intention in doing so – anyone may think that if he can: I am unable to do so. – I have already drawn attention in §13 above to cases of free justice that cannot be denied without chicanery and obstinacy. – If anyone nevertheless insisted on denying to me the occurrence of all such actions, then according to him morals would be a science without a real object, like astrology and alchemy, and it would be a waste of time

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^a *Aequi*

^b *Iniqui*

^c *Noth*

^d *Trüben, lieben Eidgenossen, wulst's minem Wip und Kinde gedenken* [von Winkelried, a Swiss hero, came to the rescue of his compatriots in the battle of Sempach, 1386]

disputing any further about its basis. So I would have finished with him, and am speaking to those who accept the reality of the matter.

It is, then, only to actions of the aforementioned kind that we assign genuine *moral worth*. What we find as peculiar and characteristic of them is the exclusion of the kind of motives by which all human actions are otherwise called forth, namely the *self-interested*^c ones, in the widest sense of the word. Thus the discovery of a self-interested motive entirely removes the moral worth of an action if it was the only motive, and reduces it if it had an accessory effect. The absence of all egoistic motivation is therefore *the criterion of an action of moral worth*. It could indeed be objected that actions of pure malice and cruelty are also not *self-interested*: however, it is plain to see that these cannot be meant here, since they are the opposite of the actions under discussion. Someone who nevertheless holds to the strictness of the definition may expressly exclude them by the sign that is essential to them, their having the suffering of others as their end. – In addition, as a wholly internal and hence less evident sign of actions of moral worth, there is the fact that they leave behind a certain satisfaction with ourselves, which is called the approval of conscience; just as for their part the actions opposed to them, those of injustice and unkindness, even more those of malice and cruelty, receive an opposite internal self-judgment. Then again, as a secondary and accidental external sign, there is the fact that actions of the first kind call forth the approval and respect of impartial witnesses, while those of the second call forth the opposite.

We now have to treat actions of moral worth, thus established and acknowledged as factually given, as the phenomenon that lies before us to be explained, and consequently we have to investigate *what* it is that can move a human being to actions of this kind – an investigation which, if we succeed in it, must necessarily bring to light the genuine moral incentive, and, since all of ethics has to be supported by that, our problem would then be solved.

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§16 *Presentation and proof of the sole genuine moral incentive*

After the foregoing preparations, which were unavoidably necessary, I come to the demonstration of the true incentive that lies at the basis of all actions of genuine moral worth. And the incentive that will reveal itself to us as this is such that, by virtue of its seriousness and its indubitable reality, it stands completely removed from all the hair-splittings, clevernesses, sophisms,

^c *eigennützig*

assertions plucked out of the air and aprioristic soap bubbles that previous systems have wanted to make the source of moral actions and the basis of ethics. Since I do not wish to *propose* this moral incentive for optional acceptance, but really to *prove* it as the only one possible, while this proof requires the combination of many thoughts, I set down in advance some premisses which are the presuppositions of the proof and can indeed count as *axioms*, except for the last two which rely on discussions given above.

- 1) No action can happen without sufficient motive; no more than a stone can move without a sufficient push or a pull.
- 2) Nor can an action fail to occur when a motive sufficient for the character of the agent is present, unless a stronger counter-motive makes its omission necessary.
- 3) What moves the will is solely well-being and woe^a as such, and taken in the widest sense of the word; just as conversely well-being and woe means 'in accordance with a will, or against it'. Thus every motive must have a relation to well-being and woe.
- 206 4) Consequently, every action relates to a being receptive to well-being and woe, as its final end.
- 5) This being is either the agent himself, or another, who is then passively^b involved in the action, in that it happens to his detriment or to his benefit and advantage.
- 6) Every action whose final end is the well-being and woe of the agent himself is an *egoistic* action.
- 7) Everything said here about actions applies equally to omission of those actions for which there is a motive or counter-motive.
- 8) As a consequence of the explanation given in the previous paragraph, *egoism* and *moral worth* of an action totally exclude one another. If an action has an egoistic end as its motive, then it can have no moral worth: if an action should have moral worth, then no egoistic end, immediate or mediate, near or distant, may be its motive.
- 9) In consequence of the elimination of alleged duties to ourselves carried out in §5,²⁹ the moral significance^c of an action can reside only in its relation to others: only in regard to them can it have moral worth or reprehensibility,^d and accordingly be an action of justice, or of loving kindness, or be the opposite of either.

^a *Wohl und Wehe*

^b *passive*

^c *Bedeutsamkeit*

^d *Verwerflichkeit*

From these premisses the following is evident: the *well-being and woe* that must (by premiss 3) lie at the basis of every action or omission as its final end is either that of the agent himself or that of someone else who is passively involved in the action. In the *first case* the action is necessarily *egoistic*; because an interested motive lies at its basis. This is not merely the case with actions that we obviously undertake for our own benefit and advantage, which is the great majority. It also comes in as soon as we expect from an action any remote success *for ourselves*, be it in this world or another, or if we have in view our honour, our reputation among people, our respect from someone in particular, the sympathy of the onlookers, and the like; and equally if by this action we have the intention of upholding a maxim from whose universal observance we potentially^a expect an advantage *for ourselves*, such as that of justice, or of universal helpful support etc.; the same would apply if we thought it advisable to follow some absolute command that issued from an unknown yet obviously superior power, since then nothing can move us to do so other than *fear* of the disadvantageous consequences of *disobedience*, even though they are thought only in a general and indeterminate way; and similarly if someone endeavours through any action or omission to assert his own high opinion of himself, bound up clearly or unclearly with his worth or dignity, an opinion he would otherwise have to give up, seeing his pride dented in the process; and then finally if, on Wolffian principles, one wishes to work towards one's own perfection by so acting. In short, one may posit whatever one wishes as the ultimate motivating ground^b of an action: it will always turn out in the end that by some roundabout route or other the genuine incentive is *the agent's own well-being and woe*, that the action is therefore *egoistic* and consequently *without moral worth*. There is only one single case in which this does not take place: that is, if the ultimate motivating ground for an action, or an omission, resides directly and exclusively in the *well-being and woe* of someone *other* who is passively involved in it, so that the active party has in view in his acting, or omitting, simply and solely the well-being and woe of *another* and has nothing at all as his end but that that other should remain unharmed, or indeed receive help, support and relief. *This end alone* impresses on an action or omission the stamp of *moral worth* – which thus rests exclusively on the action's occurring, or failing to occur, merely for the advantage and benefit *of another*. For as soon as this is not the case, the *well-being and woe*, which drives us to *every* action or restrains us from it,

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^a *eventualiter*^b *Beweggrund*

208 can only be that of *the agent himself*: but then the action or omission is always *egoistic*, and so *without moral worth*.

Now if my action is to happen simply and solely *for the sake of the other*, then *his well-being and woe* must be *my motive immediately*, just as *my own* is in the case of all other actions. This brings our problem to a tighter expression, namely this: how is it at all possible for the well-being and woe of *another* to move my will immediately, i.e. in just the way that only my own otherwise does, that is, for it to become my motive directly, and further to become it even to such a degree that I give it more or less preference over my own well-being and woe, which is otherwise the sole source of my motives? – Obviously only by that other's becoming *the ultimate end* of my will, just as I myself otherwise am: by the fact that I will *his* well-being and do not will *his* woe, and that I do so quite immediately, as immediately as I otherwise do only *my own*. But this presupposes necessarily that in the case of *his* woe as such I directly suffer along with him,^a feel *his* woe as otherwise I feel only mine, and so will his well-being immediately as otherwise I will only mine. But this requires that I *be identified with him* in some way, i.e. that that total *distinction* between me and the other, on which precisely my egoism rests, be removed at least to a certain degree. But now, since I am not lodged *in the skin* of the other, it is solely by means of the *cognition* that I have of him, i.e. the representation of him in my head, that I can identify with him to such an extent that my deed proclaims that distinction to be removed. However, the process analysed here is not one that is dreamt up or plucked out of the air, but a wholly real and indeed by no means a rare one: it is the everyday phenomenon of *compassion*,^b i.e. the wholly immediate *sympathy*,^c independent of any other consideration, in the first place towards another's *suffering*,^d and hence towards the prevention or removal of this suffering, which is ultimately what all satisfaction and all well-being and happiness consists in. This compassion alone is the real basis of all *free* justice and all *genuine* loving kindness. Only in so far as an action has sprung from it does that action have moral worth: and every
 209 action that proceeds from any other motives whatever has none. As soon as this compassion is alert, the well-being and woe of the other is immediately close to my heart, in just the same way, though not always to the same degree, as only my own is otherwise: therefore the distinction between him and me is now no longer an absolute one.

^a *geradezu mitleide*

^b *Mitleid*

^c *Theilnahme* [also 'participation']

^d *Leiden*

This process is certainly worthy of astonishment, and indeed mysterious. It is in truth the great mystery of ethics, its primitive phenomenon and the boundary stone beyond which only metaphysical speculation can dare to step. In that process we see the removal of the dividing wall, which by the light of nature (as old theologians call reason) thoroughly separates being from being, and the not-I to some extent become the I. Still, we wish to leave the metaphysical interpretation of the phenomenon untouched for now, and to see first whether all actions of free justice and of genuine loving kindness really flow from this process. Then our problem will be solved, as we shall have demonstrated the ultimate foundation of morality in human nature itself, which foundation cannot in turn be a problem of *ethics*, but, as with everything existing *as such*, one of *metaphysics*. Except that the metaphysical interpretation of the primitive ethical phenomenon lies well beyond the question set by the Royal Society, which is directed towards the basis of ethics, and it can at best be appended merely as an addition to be given optionally and taken optionally. – But before I move on to the derivation of the cardinal virtues from the fundamental incentive I have expounded, I have two further essential remarks to add by way of supplement.

1) For the sake of easier comprehensibility I simplified the above derivation of compassion as the sole source of actions of moral worth, by intentionally leaving out of account the incentive of *malice*, which, disinterested in the way that compassion is, makes the *pain* of others its ultimate end. Now, however, by incorporating it, we can summarize the proof given above more completely and more stringently as follows:

There are just *three fundamental incentives* for human actions; and it is only through the arousal of them that any possible motives whatsoever have effect. They are: 210

- a) Egoism; that wills one's own well-being (is limitless).
- b) Malice; that wills someone else's woe (goes as far as the most extreme cruelty).
- c) Compassion; which wills someone else's well-being (goes as far as noble-mindedness and magnanimity).

Every human action must be traceable back to one of these incentives – although two of them can also operate jointly. Now since we have assumed actions of moral worth as factually given, they too must proceed from one of these fundamental incentives. But, according to premiss 8, they cannot spring from the *first* incentive; still less from the *second*, since all actions that proceed from it are morally reprehensible, while the first provides in part morally indifferent ones. So they must issue from

the *third* incentive: and this will receive corroboration *a posteriori* in what follows.

2) Immediate sympathy towards the other is restricted to his *suffering* and is not also aroused, at least not directly, by his *well-being*: rather, this in and of itself leaves us indifferent. *J. J. Rousseau* says this as well in *Emile* (Book IV): ‘First maxim: it is not in the human heart to put ourselves in the place of people who are happier than ourselves, but only of those who are to be pitied more’^a etc.

The ground for this is that pain, suffering – which includes all lack, privation, need and even every wish – is *what is positive, what is immediately felt*. The nature of satisfaction, pleasure, or happiness, by contrast, consists only in a privation’s being removed, a pain’s being stilled. So they have an effect *negatively*. And for that very reason need and wish are the condition of every pleasure. *Plato* already recognized this, and excepted only pleasant smells and the joys of the intellect (*Republic* IX, p. 264ff. Bip.).^b *Voltaire* too says: ‘There are no true pleasures without true needs.’^c Thus the *positive*, that which makes itself known of itself, is pain: satisfaction and pleasures are the *negative*, the mere removal of the former. Upon this rests first of all the fact that only the suffering, the lack, the danger, the helplessness of the other awaken our sympathy directly and as such. The happy, contented person *as such* leaves us indifferent: really because his condition is a negative one, the absence of pain, lack and need. We can indeed be glad about the happiness, the well-being, the pleasure of others: but then this is secondary and mediated by the fact that their suffering and privation had previously distressed us; or on the other hand we sympathize with the one who is feeling happiness and pleasure, not *as such*, but in so far as he is our child, father, friend, relative, servant, subject and so on. But someone feeling happiness and pleasure *purely as such* does not arouse our immediate sympathy in the way that someone suffering, deprived, unhappy does *purely as such*. And then even *for ourselves* it is properly only our suffering, in which are to be included all lack, need, wish, and indeed boredom, that arouses our activity, whereas a condition of satisfaction and joy leaves us inactive and in idle repose: why should it not be exactly the same with respect to others? – especially since our sympathy rests on an identification with them. The sight of someone happy and feeling pleasure *purely as such* can very easily arouse our envy too, the disposition to which

^a Première maxime: il n’est pas dans le coeur humain, de se mettre à la place des gens, qui sont plus heureux que nous, mais seulement de ceux, qui sont plus à plaindre

^b [See *Rep.* 584a ff. Schopenhauer cites the Bipont edition]

^c Il n’est de vrais plaisirs, qu’avec de vrais besoins [*Précis de l’Ecclésiaste* (*Précis of Ecclesiastes*), line 30]

lies in every human being, and which found its place above under the anti-moral powers.

As a consequence of the above exposition of compassion as a being-motivated^d immediately by the suffering of the other, I must also rebuke the error – frequently repeated later – made by *Cassina* (*Analytical Essay on Compassion*,^e 1788; German by Pockels, 1790), who holds that compassion comes about through a momentary deception of fantasy, as we ourselves substitute ourselves in place of the sufferer and then, in our imagination, take ourselves to be suffering *his* pains in *our* person. It is not like that at all; rather it remains clear and present to us at every single moment that he is the sufferer, not *us*: and it is precisely *in his* person, not in ours, that we feel the pain, to our distress. We suffer *with* him,^a thus *in* him: we feel his pain as *his*, and do not imagine that it is ours – indeed, the happier our own condition is and the more the consciousness of it thus contrasts with the position of the other, the more receptive we are to compassion. But the explanation of the possibility of this highly important phenomenon is not so easy, nor to be attained by the purely psychological route, as *Cassina* attempted to do. It can turn out only metaphysically; and I will attempt to give such an explanation in the final chapter.

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However, I now move on to the derivation of actions of genuine moral worth from their proven source. In the previous chapter I have already presented the rule ‘Harm no one; rather help everyone to the extent that you can’^b as the universal maxim of such actions, and consequently as the highest principle of ethics. Since this maxim contains *two propositions*, the actions corresponding to it split by themselves into two classes.

§17 The virtue of justice

On closer consideration of the process of compassion that was proved above as the primitive ethical phenomenon, it can be seen at first glance that there are two clearly separated degrees to which the suffering of another can immediately become my motive, i.e. determine me to acting or refraining. It can do so, first, only to the degree that, working against egoistic or malicious motives, it prevents me from causing a suffering to the other, in other words bringing about what is not yet the case, and myself becoming the cause of someone’s else pains; then it can do so to the higher degree

^d Motivirtwerden

^e *Saggio analitico sulla compassione*

^a *Wir leiden mit ihm*

^b *Neminem laede; imo omnes, quantum potes, iuva*

213 where compassion, having positive effect, impels me to active help. The division between so-called duties of right and duties of virtue, more correctly between justice and loving kindness, that came out so forced in *Kant*, here emerges entirely by itself and in so doing testifies to the correctness of the principle: it is the natural, unmistakable, sharp line between the negative and the positive, between non-harming and helping. The previous nomenclature, duties of right and of virtue, the latter also called duties of love or imperfect duties, first of all has the fault of co-ordinating genus and species: for justice is also a virtue. It is also based on much too wide an expansion of the concept *duty*, which I will restore to its proper boundaries further below. So in place of the two duties above I put two virtues, that of justice and that of loving kindness, which I call cardinal virtues, because from them all the rest issue practically and can be derived theoretically. Both are rooted in natural compassion. But this compassion itself is an undeniable fact of human consciousness, is essential to it, does not rest on presuppositions, concepts, religions, dogmas, myths, upbringing and education, but instead is original and immediate, resides in human nature itself, and for that very reason stands firm beneath all relationships and shows itself in all lands and times. Thus appeal is confidently made to it everywhere, as to something necessarily present in every human being, and nowhere does it belong to the 'foreign gods'. On the contrary, we call someone who appears to lack it inhuman,^a just as 'humanity'^b is often used as a synonym of compassion.³⁰

Thus the first degree of effectiveness of this genuine and natural moral incentive is only *negative*. Originally we are all inclined towards injustice and violence, because our need, our desires, our anger and hatred enter into consciousness immediately and so have the right of prior occupancy;^c by contrast, someone else's sufferings that our injustice and violence causes come into consciousness merely by the secondary route of *representation* and only through experience, hence mediately – so *Seneca* says: 'In no one does the good mind come before the bad', *Epistles*, 50.^d The first degree of the effect of compassion, then, is that it intervenes to obstruct those sufferings about to be caused to others that arise out of myself in consequence of the anti-moral powers that dwell within me, calls out 'Stop!' to me and places itself as a defensive shield before the other, which protects him from the injury that my egoism, or malice, would otherwise drive me to. In

^a einen Unmenschen

^b Menschlichkeit

^c *Jus primi occupantis*

^d *Ad neminem ante bona mens venit, quam mala* [*Epistles*, 50, 7]

this manner there arises from this first degree of compassion the maxim 'Harm no one',^e i.e. the principle of *justice*, a virtue which has its exclusive, purely moral origin, free of any admixture, here alone and which can have it nowhere else, because otherwise it would have to rest upon egoism. If my mind^f is receptive to compassion up to that degree, then it will restrain me wherever and whenever I might use the suffering of others as a means to achieve my ends, regardless of whether this suffering be one that commences in the moment or later, direct or indirect, conveyed by intermediate links. Consequently I will no more seize the property than the person of the other, no more cause him mental^g than bodily suffering, in other words not only restrain myself from all physical injury, but just as little bring him pain by a mental route, through offence, worry, annoyance or slander. The same compassion will hold me back from seeking the satisfaction of my lusts at the cost of female individuals' happiness in life, or from seducing the wife of another, or from corrupting youngsters morally and physically by enticing them into pederasty.³¹ However, it is by no means required that compassion is actually aroused in every single case, where anyway it would often come too late: rather, out of the recognition of the suffering that every unjust action necessarily brings upon others, a recognition attained once and for all and sharpened by the feeling of enduring a wrong, i.e. that of someone else's superior power, the maxim 'Harm no one'^a emerges in noble minds, and rational deliberation elevates it to the firm resolve, formed once and for all, to respect the rights of every one, to allow oneself no encroachment upon them, to keep oneself free of the self-reproach of being the cause of someone else's sufferings, and so not to shift onto others with violence or cunning the burdens and sufferings of life which circumstances bring to everyone, but to bear one's allotted portion, so as not to double that of another. For although *principles*^b and abstract cognition in general are in no way the original source or prime basis of all morals, yet they are indispensable for a moral life, as the container, the reservoir^c in which the disposition^d that has risen out of the source of all morality, which does not flow at every moment, is stored so that it can flow down through supply channels when a case for application comes. Thus in the moral sphere things are as they are in the physiological, where e.g. the gall

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^e *neminem laede*^f *Gemüth*^g *geistig*^a *neminem laede*^b *Grundsätze*^c *Réservoir*^d *Gesinnung*

bladder is necessary as reservoir for the products of the liver, and in many similar cases. Without firmly formed *principles* we would be irresistibly at the mercy of the anti-moral incentives when they are excited into affects by external impressions. Holding the principles firm and following them in spite of the motives that work against them is *self-control*. Here also lies the cause why women, who because of the weakness of their reason are much less capable than men of understanding universal *principles*, of holding them firm and taking them as their guide, are as a rule inferior to men in the virtue of justice, and thus in honesty and conscientiousness too: so injustice and falseness are their most frequent vice and lies are their proper element. On the other hand they surpass men in the virtue of *loving kindness*: for the occasion for this is mostly *intuitive*^c and therefore speaks immediately to compassion, to which women are decidedly more readily receptive. But only what is intuitive, present, immediately real has true existence for them: what is remote, absent, past or future and cognizable only by means of concepts is not easily graspable for them. So there is compensation here too: justice is more the masculine, loving kindness more the feminine virtue. The thought of women presiding in the office of judge provokes laughter: yet the sisters of mercy surpass even the brothers of mercy. But now an *animal*, since it totally lacks abstract or rational cognition, is capable of no resolves at all, let alone principles, and so is not capable of any *self-control*, but is surrendered without defence to impression and affect. And for just that reason it has no conscious *morality* – although the species display great differences in malice and goodness of character, and even individuals do so in the highest kinds. – In consequence of what has been said, compassion still operates only indirectly in the individual actions of the just person, through the mediation of principles and not both potentially and actually;^a somewhat the same way as in statics the greater *velocity* effected by the greater length of one beam on a balance, as a result of which the smaller mass holds the greater in equilibrium, has its effect in a state of rest only potentially, yet has just as good an effect as it does actually. Yet, all the same, compassion is constantly ready to come forth actually: so if in individual cases the chosen maxim of justice may perhaps falter, then no motive (setting aside the egoistic ones) is more effective at supporting it and enlivening just resolves than that which is created out of the original source itself, compassion. This applies not merely where the

^c *anschaulich*

^a *nicht sowohl actu als potentia*

injury of the person, but also where that of property is concerned, e.g. if someone feels a desire to keep an object of value they have found; then – excluding all prudential and all religious motives against it – nothing will bring him back to the path of justice so readily as the representation of the worry, the heartbreak and the woeful complaint of the one who lost it. In a feeling of this truth, it often happens that a public appeal for the return of lost money has added to it the assurance that the one who has lost it is a poor person, a domestic servant or the like.

These considerations will hopefully make it clear that, however little it may appear so at first sight, it is indeed the case that justice too, as a genuine, free virtue, has its origin in compassion. Anyone to whom this soil might nonetheless seem too poor for it to be possible that that great, authentic cardinal virtue is rooted solely in it, should recall from the above how small is the extent of genuine, freely willed, disinterested and unadorned justice to be found among human beings, how it always strikes us simply as a surprising exception, and how both in quality and quantity it relates to its pseudo-kind,^b the justice that rests on mere prudence and is loudly proclaimed everywhere, as gold relates to copper. I would like to call the latter earthly justice,^c but the other heavenly^d justice, since it is the one that, according to Hesiod, forsakes the earth in the age of iron to dwell with the gods in heaven. For this rare plant, which is always only exotic on earth, the root we have demonstrated is strong enough.

Injustice,^e or *wrong*,^f always consists, accordingly, in *injury* to another. So the concept of *wrong* is a *positive* one and precedent to that of *right*, which is negative and designates merely the actions that one can perform without injuring others, i.e. without doing *wrong*. It can easily be seen that here also belong all actions that have the sole end of preventing attempted wrong. For no sympathy with the other, no compassion for him, can demand of me that I allow myself to be injured by him, i.e. to suffer wrong. That the concept of *right* is the *negative*, as opposed to *wrong* which is *positive*, can also be discovered in the first explanation of that concept which the father of the philosophical theory of justice, *Hugo Grotius*, presents at the start of his work: 'Right is here nothing other than what is just, and that more in the negating sense than in the affirming, in so far as right is what is not

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^b *Afterart*^c δικαιοσύνη πανδημος^d οὐρανια^e *Ungerechtigkeit*^f *Unrecht*

unjust'^a (*The Law of War and Peace*,^b Book I, ch. I, §3). The negativity of justice is preserved, contrary to appearances, even in the trivial definition 'Giving to each his own'. If it is his own, we do not need to give it to him; so it means: 'Not taking his own from anyone'. – Because the requirement of justice is purely negative, it can be compelled: for the 'Harm no one'^c can be practised by everyone at the same time. The institution for compelling this is *the state*, whose sole end is to protect individuals from one another and the whole from external enemies. Some German philosophers of this venal age would like to twist it into an institution of education in morality, and of improvement – and here there lurks in the background the jesuitical aim of removing each one's personal freedom and individual development, to make him a mere cog in a Chinese machine of state and religion. But this is the path on which we reached inquisitions, autos da fé and religious wars in the olden days: Frederick the Great's utterance 'In my land everyone is to take care of his own happiness after his own fashion' meant that he never wanted to set foot on that path. On the other hand, even now we see the state assume care for the metaphysical need of its members almost everywhere (with the apparent rather than real exception of North America). Regimes seem to have chosen as their principle the proposition of Quintus Curtius: 'Nothing rules the masses as effectively as superstition; otherwise unbridled, cruel and fickle, once they are captured by some religious delusion, they prefer to obey their priests rather than their leaders.'^{d,32}

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The concepts *wrong* and *right*, as synonymous with injury and non-injury, the latter also including the prevention of injury, are obviously independent of all positive law-giving and prior to it: so there is a purely ethical right, or natural right, and a pure doctrine of right, i.e. one independent of all positive institution. Though its principles have an empirical origin in so far as they come about by virtue of the concept *injury*, in themselves they rest on the pure understanding which supplies the principle 'The cause of a cause is the cause of its effect'^e which here means that whatever I must do in order to fend off injury to myself by another, he is the cause of, and not I, so that I can resist all infringements from his

^a *Jus hic nihil aliud, quam quod justum est significat, idque negante magis sensu, quam agente, ut jus sit, quod injustum non est*

^b *De jure belli et pacis*

^c *neminem laede*

^d *nulla res efficacius multitudinem regit, quam superstitio: alioquin impotens, saeva, mutabilis; ubi vana religione capta est, melius vatibus, quam ducibus suis paret* [Q. Curtius Rufus, *Historiae Alexandri Magni Macedonis* (*History of Alexander the Great of Macedonia*), IV, 10, 7]

^e *causa causae est causa effectus*

side without doing him wrong. It is, as it were, a moral law of repercussion. Thus from the combination of the empirical concept of injury with the rule supplied by the pure understanding there arise the fundamental concepts of wrong and right, which everyone grasps *a priori* and applies at once on the occasion offered by experience. If any empiricist denies this, we should – since for him experience alone counts – direct him to the savages,^a who all distinguish right from wrong quite correctly, and often finely and precisely, which is strikingly visible in their trade by barter and other transactions with the crews of European ships, and in their visits to them. They are bold and confident when they are right, and fearful by contrast when right is not on their side. In disputes they are content to accept a rightful compromise, but unjust conduct by contrast provokes them to war. – The *doctrine of right*^b is a part of morals which establishes the actions one is not permitted to perform if one does not want to injure others, i.e. commit wrong. Thus morals has the *active* side in view here. But law-giving takes this chapter of morals to employ it with respect to the *passive* side, in other words the other way round, and to consider the same actions as ones that no one needs to suffer, since no wrong ought to happen to him. Against these actions the state now erects the bulwark of laws, as positive right. Its intention is that no one should *suffer* wrong: the intention of the moral doctrine of right, on the other hand, is that no one should *do* wrong.* 219

In every unjust action the wrong is the same in terms of *quality*, namely injury of another, be it to his person, his freedom, his property, his honour. But in terms of *quantity* it can be very different. This difference in the *magnitude of wrong* does not appear to be properly investigated as yet by moral theorists, but it is recognized everywhere in real life, seeing that the magnitude of the reproach^c we issue corresponds to it. Matters are similar with the *justice* of actions. To elucidate this: e.g. someone who steals a loaf of bread when near to death from hunger commits a wrong – but how small his injustice is compared with that of a rich man who in some way deprives a poor man of his last possession. The rich man who pays his day labourer acts justly; but how small this justice is compared with that of a poor man who of his own free will returns to the rich man a purse of money he has found. However, the measure of this highly significant

* The doctrine of right can be found expounded in *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, §62.³³

^a *Wilden*

^b *Rechtslehre*

^c *Tadel*

220 difference in the *quantity* of justice and injustice (while the quality remains constantly the same) is not direct and absolute, like that on a measuring rod, but mediate and relative, like that of sines and tangents. I put forward the following formula for this: the magnitude of my action's injustice equals the magnitude of the ill^a I inflict on another by it, divided by the magnitude of the advantage I gain by means of it: – and the magnitude of my action's justice equals the magnitude of the advantage that my injuring the other would bring me, divided by the magnitude of the harm that he would undergo because of it. – However, there is in addition a *double injustice* which is specifically distinguished from all simple injustice, however great it may be; it manifests itself in the fact that the magnitude of the impartial witness's indignation, which constantly falls out in proportion to the magnitude of the injustice, reaches the highest degree solely with this double kind, and detests it as something outrageous that cries out to heaven, a monstrous deed,^b a pollution,^c before which, as it were, the gods hide their faces. This *double injustice* takes place where someone has expressly assumed the responsibility of protecting another in a determinate respect, so that non-fulfilment of this obligation would already be injury of the other and therefore wrong; but then he himself goes beyond this to assault and injure the other in the very respect in which he ought to have protected him. This is the case, e.g., where the guard placed on duty, or the escort, turns murderer, the trusted custodian turns thief, the guardian cheats his wards of their property, the advocate prevaricates, the judge lets himself be bribed, someone from whom advice is sought intentionally gives the asker a disastrous piece of advice – all of which collectively is thought under the concept of *betrayal*, which is the abomination of the world. In accordance with this *Dante* too places traitors deep in the lowest ground of hell, where Satan himself resides (*Inferno*, XI, 61–66).³⁴

Now since the concept of *obligation*^d has entered the discussion, this is the place to establish the concept of *duty*,^e which is so often applied in ethics as in life, but which is nonetheless given too great an extension. We found that wrong always consists in injury to another, be it to his person, his freedom, his property or his honour. From this it seems to follow that every wrong has to be a positive assault, a deed. Except there are actions whose mere *omission* is an injustice: such actions are called *duties*. This is the true

^a *Uebel*

^b *Unthat*

^c ἄγος

^d *Verpflichtung*

^e *Pflicht*

philosophical definition of the concept of *duty*, which, on the other hand, forfeits all its peculiar character and gets lost if, as in morals hitherto, one wants to call every praiseworthy way of acting duty, forgetting in the process that whatever is *duty* must also be *indebtedness*.^f Thus *Pflicht*, το δεον, *le devoir*, *duty is an action by whose mere omission one injures another, i.e. commits wrong*. Obviously this can be the case only by the ommitter's having undertaken to do such an action, i.e. by his having precisely *obliged* himself to do it. Consequently all duties rest upon an obligation entered into. This obligation is as a rule an explicit, mutual agreement, as e.g. between prince and people, government and civil servant, master and servant, advocate and client, doctor and the sick, in general between anyone who has taken on any kind of provision and his customer, in the broadest sense of the word. This is why every duty gives a right: because no one can oblige himself without a motive, i.e. here without some advantage to himself. Only *one* obligation is known to me that is *not* assumed by means of an agreement but rather immediately through a mere action, because the one to whom one has it was not yet there when one assumed it:³⁵ that is the obligation of parents to their children. Whoever puts a child into the world has the *duty* to maintain it until it is capable of maintaining itself: and should this time *never* arrive, as with a blind person, cripple, cretin and the like, then the duty too never ceases. For by the mere non-provision of help, that is by an omission, he would injure his child, indeed bring it to its demise. The moral duty of children towards their parents is not so immediate or clear cut. It rests on the fact that, because every duty gives a right, the parents must also have a right in relation to their children, which grounds the duty of obedience on the children's part – but this duty subsequently ceases along with the right from which it sprang. Then its place will be taken by gratitude for what the parents did over and above what was strictly their duty. Yet, however ugly a vice ingratitude is, and however outrageous it frequently is, gratitude can still not be called a *duty*: because its non-occurrence is not an injury to the other, and so not a *wrong*. Besides, the benefactor would have to have thought that he was sealing a deal on the quiet. – At a pinch one could make compensation for damages caused into an obligation that arises immediately from an action. However, as the removal of the consequences of an unjust action, this is a mere effort to extinguish them, something purely negative that rests on the fact that the action itself ought not to have occurred. – Let it also be remarked here

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^f *Schuldigkeit*

that fair-mindedness^a is the enemy of justice and often grossly affects it: consequently one should not grant it too much importance. The German is a friend of fair-mindedness, the Englishman holds to justice.³⁶

The law of motivation is just as strict as that of physical causality, and so brings with it a compulsion just as irresistible. In accordance with this there are two ways of practising wrong, that of *force*^b and that of *cunning*.^c Just as I can kill or rob another by force, or compel him to obey me, so I can accomplish all this through cunning, by presenting false motives to his intellect, in consequence of which he must do what he would not do otherwise. This happens by means of the *lie*, whose reprehensibility rests solely upon this, and so attaches to it only in so far as it is the tool of cunning, i.e. of compulsion mediated by motivation. For firstly my lying itself cannot happen without motive: but this motive, with the rarest exceptions, will be an unjust one, namely the intent of steering others against whom I have no force in accordance with my will, i.e. of compelling them by means of motivation. This intent is at the basis even of the merely windbagging lie, seeing that anyone who uses it seeks in so doing to place himself in higher regard among others than he is entitled to. – The binding nature of *promises* and *contracts* rests on the fact that, if they are not fulfilled, they are the most solemn lie whose intent, to exercise moral compulsion over others, is all the more evident given that the motive for the lie, the performance by the opposite party, is expressly announced. The despicable aspect of deceit comes from the fact that it disarms its man through hypocrisy before it assaults him. *Betrayal* is its pinnacle and is profoundly detested because it belongs in the category of *double injustice*. But just as I can, without wrong, and so by right, repel force with force, so I can also do it, where I lack force or where it seems more comfortable to me, with cunning. Thus in cases where I have a right to force, I have a right *to lie* as well: e.g. against robbers and illegitimate users of force of any kind, who I therefore entice into a trap through cunning. That is why a forcibly coerced promise is not binding. – But *the right to lie* in fact goes even further: it applies in the case of any wholly unauthorized question that concerns my personal or business affairs and is thus intrusive,^a and where not only answering it, but even merely rebutting it with ‘I do not wish to say’ would put me in danger by arousing suspicion. Here the lie is self-defence against unauthorized inquisitiveness, whose motive is mostly

^a *Billigkeit*

^b *Gewalt*

^c *List*

^a *vorwitzig*

not a benevolent one. For just as I have the right to put up in advance, at the transgressor's risk, a physical resistance against the presupposed ill will of others and their presumed physical force, and hence, as a preventive measure, to secure my garden wall with sharp spikes, to let fierce dogs loose in my yard at night, and even in some circumstances to set mantraps and spring guns, whose bad consequences the intruder must put down to himself – so I also have the right to keep altogether secret anything whose disclosure would expose me to the assault of others, and I also have cause for that, because here too I must assume the ill will of others as very easily possible and take precautions against it in advance. Thus Ariosto says:

However much dissembling is reproached for the most part and testifies to bad intent, in very many things it has evidently brought good, by avoiding harm, disgrace and death: for we do not always speak with friends, in this more gloomy than cheerful mortal life that seethes with envy^b (*Orlando Furioso*, IV, 1).

I am permitted, then, without doing wrong, to use cunning in advance to oppose even a transgression by cunning that is merely presumed, and so I do not need to account for myself to someone who pries into my private circumstances, nor reveal, by the answer 'I wish to keep this private', the place where there is a secret that is dangerous to me, perhaps advantageous to him, or at any rate that grants him power over me:

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They wish to know the secrets of the house, and then to be feared.^a

Rather I am authorized to dismiss him with a lie, at his risk, should it land him in a damaging error. For here the lie is the only means for countering intrusive and suspicious curiosity: so I find myself in a case of self-defence. 'Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no lies'^b is the right maxim here. For among the English, among whom the reproach of lying counts as the worst insult, and who really lie less than other nations because of that, all unauthorized questions that concern the circumstances of others are

^b [The text translates Schopenhauer's prose version, given in his own footnote, of the following verse passage:]

*Quantunque il simular sia le più volte
Ripreso, e dia di mala mente indici,
Si trova pure in molte cose e molte
Avere fatti evidenti benefici,
E danni e biasmi e morti avere tolte:
Che non conversiam' sempre con gli amici,
In questa assia più oscura che serena
Vita mortal, tutta d'invidia piena.*

^a *Scire volunt secreta domus, atque inde timeri* [Juvenal, *Satires*, III, 113]

^b [Schopenhauer gives the saying in English, with a translation in a footnote]

accordingly regarded as an incivility, which is designated by the expression 'to ask questions'.^{c,37} Anyone of understanding also proceeds in accordance with the principle expounded above, even if he is someone of the strictest rectitude. If, e.g., he is returning from a distant place where he has collected money and an unknown traveller befriends him, asks as usual first *where to* and *where from*, and then gradually begins to ask what may have taken him to that place – then he will answer with a lie, to avoid the danger of being robbed. Someone who is stopped in the house where a man whose daughter he is courting lives and asked for the cause of his unexpected presence, gives a false one without hesitation, unless he has fallen on his head. And in this way very many cases occur, in which any rational man lies without any scruples of conscience. This viewpoint alone does away with the screaming contradiction between the morals that are taught and those that are practised daily, even by the most honest and the best. Yet at the same time the proposed restriction to the case of self-defence must be strictly maintained, since otherwise this doctrine would be open to hideous abuse: for in itself the lie is a very dangerous tool. But just as the law allows everyone to bear and to use arms in spite of the prohibition on feuds, namely in case of self-defence, so morals permits the use of the lie for the same case, but likewise *only* for this case. Except for this case of self-defence against force or cunning, every lie is a tool for injustice; hence justice demands truthfulness to everyone. But what already speaks against the wholly unconditioned, exceptionless reprehensibility of the lie, residing in the essence of the thing, is this: that there are cases where lying is even a *duty*, namely for doctors; in addition, that there are *noble-minded* lies, e.g. that of Marquis Posa in *Don Carlos*,^a the one in *Jerusalem Liberated*,^b II, 22, and in general in all those cases where one person wishes to take the guilt of another upon himself; finally, even Jesus Christ once intentionally spoke an untruth (John 7: 8). In line with this *Campanella*, in his *Philosophical Poems*,^c says simply: 'Lying is fine, if it brings about great good'.^{d,38} – On the other hand, however, the current doctrine of the white lie^e is a wretched patch on the clothing of an impoverished morals. – The derivations of the injustice of lying from the *capacity for language* that are given, at *Kant's* instigation, in many compendiums are so shallow, childish and insipid

^c [Schopenhauer quotes these words in English]

^a [The drama by Schiller]

^b *Gerusalemme Liberata* [drama by Torquato Tasso]

^c *Poesie filosofiche*, *madr. 9* [See poem entitled *Della bellezza, segnal del bene, oggetto d'amore*, line 149]

^d *Bello è il mentir, se a fare gran ben' si trova* [Schopenhauer gives his own German translation in a footnote: *Schön ist das Lügen, wenn es viel gutes stiftet*]

^e *Nothlüge*

that simply in order to pronounce scorn for them one could be tempted to throw oneself into the devil's arms and say with *Talleyrand*: 'man received language so as to be able to hide his thought'.^f – *Kant*'s unconditional and boundless detestation of lying, which is put on show at every opportunity, rests either on affectation or on prejudice: in the chapter of his *Doctrine of Virtue* on lying,^g though he berates it with all the defamatory predicates, he adduces no proper grounds at all for its reprehensibility, which would surely have been more effective. Declaiming is easier than proving, and moralizing easier than being upright. *Kant* would have done better to unleash that special zeal against *schadenfreude*: this rather than lying is the genuinely devilish vice. For it is the direct opposite of compassion and is nothing other than impotent cruelty, which is incapable of bringing about the sufferings it is so pleased to see others having, and is thankful to the chance that brought them about in its stead. – The fact that, by the principle of knightly honour, the reproach of lying is taken as so very serious and as something really to be washed off with the blood of the accuser does not rest on the lie's being *wrong*, since then the accusation of a wrong committed by force would have to hurt just as much, which is well known not to be the case; rather it rests on the fact that, by the principle of knightly honour, force is really the ground of right. So someone who resorts to a lie in order to carry out a wrong, shows that he lacks force or the courage needed to apply it. Every lie testifies to fear: that is what condemns him.

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§18 The virtue of loving kindness

Justice, then, is the first and the fundamentally essential cardinal virtue. The philosophers of antiquity also recognized it as such, albeit co-ordinated with their three other unsuitable ones. On the other hand, they did not yet put forward loving kindness,^h *caritas*, ἀγαπή,ⁱ as a virtue: even *Plato*, who distinguished himself most highly in morals, still comes only as far as freely willed, disinterested justice. Loving kindness has been there practically and factually in all ages, but it was first brought into language theoretically and put forward as a virtue, and moreover as the greatest of all, and even extended to one's enemies, by Christianity, whose greatest merit consists precisely in this – though only with respect to Europe, since in Asia

^f *l'homme a reçu la parole pour pouvoir cacher sa pensée*

^g [Ak. 6: 429–31]

^h *Menschenliebe*

ⁱ [Latin and Greek for 'love' or 'charity']

boundless love of one's neighbour had already been the object both of teaching and prescription and of practice a thousand years earlier, seeing that Veda and Dharma-Sastra, Itihasa and Purana, as well as the teaching of the Buddha's Shakia Muni, do not tire of preaching it. – And if we wish to take things strictly, traces of the recommendation of loving kindness are to be found even in the ancients, e.g. in *Cicero, On Moral Ends*,^a V, 23; even already in Pythagoras, according to Iamblichus, *On the life of Pythagoras*,^b ch. 33.³⁹ The philosophical derivation of this virtue from my principle is now incumbent upon me.

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The second level at which the suffering of others immediately becomes my motive in itself and as such – by means of the process of *compassion* factually proved above, though it is mysterious as regards its origin – is clearly separated from the first level by the *positive character* of the actions that issue from it, in that now compassion does not merely hold me back from injuring the other but actually drives me on to help him. And according in part to how lively and deeply felt that immediate sympathy is, and in part how great and urgent the distress of the other is, I shall be moved by that purely moral motive to make a greater or lesser sacrifice for the other's need or distress, a sacrifice that can consist in the exertion of my bodily or mental powers for him, in my property, in my health, freedom, and even in my life. So here, in the immediate sympathy that is neither supported by nor in need of any argumentation, lies the sole exclusive origin of loving kindness, of *caritas*, ἀγαπῆ, that is, of that virtue whose maxim is 'Help everyone to the extent that you can',^c and from which flows all that ethics prescribes under the name of duties of virtue, duties of love, imperfect duties. This wholly immediate, indeed instinctual sympathy for the sufferings of others, compassion, is the sole source of such actions, if they are to *have moral worth*, i.e. be pure of all egoistic motives and for that reason awake in ourselves that inner satisfaction that is called good, contented or approving conscience – and if they are also to call forth in the spectator that peculiar applause, respect, admiration and even humbling reflection upon himself, which is an undeniable fact. If, on the contrary, a beneficent action has any other motive, then it can be nothing but egoistic, unless it goes so far as to be malicious. For corresponding to the primitive incentives of all actions expounded above, namely egoism, malice, compassion, the *motives* that can move human beings as such can

^a *De finibus*

^b *De vita Pythagorae*

^c *omnes, quantum potes, juva*

be brought under three quite universal highest classes: 1) one's own well-being, 2) another's woe, 3) another's well-being. Now if the motive of a beneficent action is not from the *third* class, then it absolutely must belong to the *first* or *second*. *The latter* is really the case sometimes: e.g. if I do good to someone in order to hurt another to whom I do not do good, or to make him feel his suffering still more intensely, or even to shame a third person who did not do good to him, or finally to humble by my action the one to whom I do good. However, *the former* is much more often the case, namely as soon as I have my eye on *my own well-being* in doing a good deed, or if what drives me is concern for reward in this world or another, or the esteem to be attained and the reputation for a noble heart, or the reflection that the one I help today could at some time help me in turn or otherwise be of use or service to me, or finally the thought that the maxim of noble-mindedness or beneficence must be upheld, since after all it could one day be to my benefit – in short, as soon as my end is anything other than the purely *objective* one that I want to see the other helped, rescued from his distress and affliction, freed from his suffering: and nothing beyond and nothing besides! Only then, and then alone, have I really shown that loving kindness, *caritas*, ἀγάπη, which it is the great distinguishing merit of Christianity to have preached. But precisely the prescriptions that the gospel attaches to its behest to love, such as 'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth'^a and similar things, are grounded upon the feeling of what I have deduced here, that is, that another's distress purely by itself, and no other consideration, must be my motive if my action is to have moral worth. It is quite rightly said in the very same place (Matthew 6: 2) that those who give with ostentation have their reward. But here too the Vedas give us, as it were, the higher blessing, repeatedly reassuring us that he who desires any reward from his works is still confined to the way of darkness and not yet ripe for redemption.^b – If someone who was giving alms were to ask me what he gets out of doing so, my conscientious answer would be: 'Just that that poor man's fate has been alleviated by so much; but apart from that nothing at all. If that is no use to you and really does not matter to you, then you did not really want to give alms, but rather to make a purchase: then you have been swindled out of your money. But if it did matter to you that that man who is oppressed by want should suffer less, then you have indeed achieved your end, you

^a μὴ γνῶτω ἡ ἄριστερά σου, τί ποιεῖ ἡ δεξιὰ σου (*sinistra tua manus haud cognoscat, quae dextra facit*) [Matthew 6:3]

^b Erlösung

get out of it the fact that he suffers less, and you see precisely how much your gift rewards itself.'

But then how is it possible that a suffering that is not *mine*, that does not afflict *me*, should nonetheless become a motive for me, should move me to acting, just as immediately as only my own suffering otherwise does? As we have said, only – despite the suffering's being given to me as something external, merely by way of external intuition or testimony – by my *feeling it as well*,^a *feeling it as mine*, yet not *in me* but *in another*. And so what *Calderon* already asserts applies here:

that between seeing suffering and suffering there is no distinction. ('The Worst is Not Always Certain',^b *Jornada II*, p. 229.⁴⁰)

But this presupposes that I have identified myself to a certain extent with the other, and consequently that the barrier between I and not-I is removed for the moment: only then does the other's business, his need, his distress, his suffering immediately become mine. Then I view him no longer, as empirical intuition nonetheless gives him, as something foreign to me, indifferent to me, entirely distinct from me, but I suffer as well in *him*, despite the fact that his skin does not enclose my nerves. Only in this way can *his* woe, *his* distress become motive *for me*: apart from that only my own can ever do so. *This process* is, I repeat, *mysterious*: for it is something of which reason can give no immediate account and whose grounds are not to be ascertained on the path of experience. And yet it happens every day. Everyone has often experienced it in himself; it has not been foreign
 230 even to the most hard-hearted and selfish person. It occurs daily before our eyes in individual things, in small things, wherever from an immediate urge, without much deliberation, one person helps another and runs to his assistance, or indeed occasionally even places his life in the most manifest danger for someone he is seeing for the first time, without thinking of anything more than the sheer fact that he sees the other's great distress and danger. It occurs on a large scale when, after long deliberation and difficult debate, the great-hearted British nation gives up 20 million pounds sterling to buy the negro slaves in its colonies their freedom – amid the jubilant applause of the whole world. Anyone who might wish to deny compassion

^a *mitempfinde*

^b

*que entre el ver
 Padecer y el padecer
 Ninguna distancia habia.*

'No siempre el peor es cierto' [a comedy whose correct title is *No siempre lo peor es cierto*]

as the incentive for this fine action in the grand style, so as to attribute it to Christianity, should reflect that in the whole of the New Testament no word is spoken against slavery – though the practice was universal in those days too – and moreover that even in 1860 in North America, one man appealed in debates about slavery to the fact that Abraham and Jacob also kept slaves.⁴¹

What the practical results of that mysterious inner process will be in each individual case ethics may discuss in chapters and paragraphs about duties of virtue, or duties of love, or imperfect duties or whatever else. The root, the basis of all of that is the one expounded here, from which springs the principle: ‘Help everyone to the extent that you can’;^a and from this all the rest is really easy to derive here, just as all duties of justice were from the first half of my principle, ‘Harm no one’.^b Ethics is in truth the easiest of all sciences, which is nothing other than what is to be expected, since it is incumbent on everyone^c to construct it himself, even to derive the rule for each case as it occurs from the highest principle that is rooted in his heart: for few have the leisure and the patience to learn a ready constructed ethics. The collective virtues flow from justice and loving kindness, and so they are the cardinal virtues, with whose derivation the foundation stone of ethics is laid. – Justice is the entire ethical content of the Old Testament, and loving kindness that of the New: the latter is the ‘new commandment’^d (John 13: 34) in which, according to Paul (Romans 13: 8–10), all Christian virtues are contained.

§19 Confirmations of the foundation of morals expounded

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The truth we have now pronounced, that compassion, as the sole non-egoistic incentive, is also the only genuinely moral one, is paradoxical in a strange, and indeed an almost incomprehensible, way. So I will attempt to make it less alien to the reader’s convictions by showing it as confirmed by experience and by the utterances of universal human feeling.

1) To this end I want first of all to take an arbitrarily invented case as an example, which can serve as a decisive experiment^e in this investigation. But so as not to make the matter easy for myself, I shall take not a case of loving kindness but an infringement of right, and indeed the strongest. – Take

^a omnes, quantum potes, juva

^b Neminem laede

^c Jeder die Obliegenheit hat

^d καινη εντολη

^e experimentum crucis

two young people, Caius and Titus, both passionately in love, though each with a different girl, and say that each of them has a rival standing squarely in his way who has precedence because of external circumstances. Both are resolved to despatch their respective rival from this world, and both are completely safe from all discovery, even from any suspicion. But as each one individually approaches the closer organization of the murder, they both desist after a struggle with themselves. They are to give us an honest and clear account of the grounds for their abandoning their resolve in this way. – Now the account that Caius gives is to be placed entirely at the choice of the reader. He may perhaps have been held back by religious grounds, such as the will of God, the retribution to come, the future judgment and the like. Or he may say: ‘I reflected that the maxim of my conduct in this case would not have been suitable for yielding a universally valid rule for all possible rational beings, in that I would have treated my rival solely as a means and not at the same time as an end.’ Or he may say with *Fichte*: ‘Every human life is a means to the realization of the moral law:^a therefore I cannot, without being indifferent to the realization of the moral law, destroy someone who is meant to contribute to that same law’ (*Moral Philosophy*,^b p. 373). – (He could incidentally counter this scruple once in possession of his beloved, by hoping soon to produce a new instrument of the moral law.) – Or he may say, after *Wollaston*:^c ‘I have deliberated that that action would be the expression of an untrue proposition.’ – Or he may say, after *Hutcheson*: ‘The moral sense, whose sensations, like those of any other sense, are not further explicable, determined me to refrain from it.’ – Or he may say, after *Adam Smith*: ‘I foresaw that my action would have aroused no sympathy at all for me in those who witnessed it.’ – Or, after *Christian Wolff*: ‘I recognized that in doing that I would be working against my own perfection and also not promoting anyone else’s.’ Or he may say, after *Spinoza*: ‘To a human being there is nothing more useful than a human being: therefore I was unwilling to kill a human being.’^d – In short, he may say what you will. – But suppose *Titus*, whose account I reserve for myself, says: ‘As it came to the arrangements and I therefore had to occupy myself for the moment not with my passion but with that rival of mine, then it became fully clear to me for the first time what was really supposed to be happening to him now. But then compassion and

^a *Sittengesetz*

^b *Sittenlehre*

^c *Wollastone*

^d *Homini nihil utilius homine: ergo hominem interimere nolui* [see *Ethics* IV, prop. 18, scholium; also IV, prop. 35, corollaries]

pity^c seized me, I felt sorry for him, I could not find the heart to do it: I was unable to do it.' – Now I ask every honest and unprejudiced reader: Which of the two is the better human being? – Which of the two would he rather assign his own fate to? Which of them was held back by the purer motive? – Where, accordingly, does the foundation of morals lie?

2) Nothing outrages our moral feeling in its deepest ground so much as cruelty. We can forgive every other crime, but cruelty alone we cannot. The ground for this is that cruelty is the direct opposite of compassion. If we are informed of a very cruel deed, as is, e.g., the one that the newspapers are reporting just now about a mother who murdered her five-year-old boy by pouring boiling oil down his throat and her younger child by burying it alive; or the one that is just reported from Algiers, that after a chance dispute and fight between a Spaniard and an Algerian, the latter, being the stronger, tore the other man's whole lower jaw bone clean off and carried it away as a trophy, abandoning him still alive – then we are seized with horror and cry out: 'How is it possible to do such a thing?' – What is the sense of this question? Is it perhaps: How is it possible to fear so little the punishments of the future life? – Hardly. – Or: How is it possible to act on a maxim that is so highly unsuited to becoming a universal law for all rational beings? – Certainly not. – Or: How is it possible to be so negligent of one's own perfection and that of others? – Equally not. – The sense of that question is quite certainly simply this: How is it possible to be so much without compassion? – Thus it is the greatest lack of compassion that impresses upon a deed the most profound moral reprehensibility and hatefulness. Consequently compassion is the real moral incentive.

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3) The basis of morals and the incentive to morality^a that I have presented is simply the only one that can boast of a real, and indeed an extensive efficacy. For surely no one will want to claim this for the remaining moral principles of philosophers, since they consist in abstract and sometimes hair-splitting propositions with no other foundation than an artificial combination of concepts, so that often their application to real acting would even have a ridiculous aspect to it. A good deed executed solely out of regard for the Kantian moral principle would, at bottom, be the work of a philosophical pedantry, or would amount to self-deception, with the agent's reason^b interpreting a deed that had other, perhaps more noble incentives, as the product of the categorical imperative and the concept of duty that is supported by nothing. However, it is not only for

^c *Erbarmen*

^a *Grundlage der Moral und Triebfeder der Moralität*

^b *Vernunft*

philosophical moral principles worked out on the basis of mere theory that a decisive efficacy can rarely be demonstrated, but even for *religious* ones that are put forward entirely for practical purposes. We see this first and foremost from the fact that, despite the great variety of religions on earth, the degree of morality, or rather immorality, shows not the least variety corresponding to it, but rather is in essence roughly the same everywhere.

234 Only we must not confuse crudeness and refinement with morality and immorality. The religion of the Greeks had an extremely slight moral tendency, virtually restricted to the oath, no dogma was taught and no morals publicly preached: but we do not see that as a result the Greeks, all things considered, were morally worse than the human beings of the Christian centuries. The morals of Christianity are of a much higher kind than those of the other religions that have ever appeared in Europe: but if anyone wished to believe therefore that European morality had improved to just the same extent and now at least excelled among its contemporaries, we would not only be able to convince him quickly that among Mohammedans, Guebres, Hindus and Buddhists at least as much honesty, loyalty, tolerance, gentleness, beneficence, nobility and self-denial is found as among the Christian peoples; but also the long catalogue of inhuman cruelties that have accompanied Christianity, in the numerous religious wars, the irresponsible crusades, the extermination of a large part of the native inhabitants of America and the population of that part of the world with negro slaves* dragged there out of Africa, without right, or any semblance of right, torn away from their families, their fatherland, their part of the world and condemned to endless convict labour, in the unrelenting persecutions of heretics and inquisition courts that cry out to the heavens, in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, in the execution of 18,000 Netherlanders by Alba, etc. etc. — would sooner assure a verdict to the detriment of Christianity. But overall, if we compare the splendid morals that Christianity and more or less every religion preaches, with the practice of its adherents, and imagine what this practice would come to if the worldly arm did not prevent crime, or indeed what we would have to fear if all laws were removed even for just one day, we shall have to confess

235 that the effect of all religions on morality is really very slight. The weakness of faith is to blame for this, to be sure. Theoretically, and so long as it goes no further than pious contemplation, everyone's faith appears strong to him. But the deed is the hard touchstone of all our convictions: if it

* Even now, according to Buxton, *The African slavetrade*, 1839, their number is increasing yearly by about 150,000 fresh Africans, in whose capture and travel more than 200,000 others perish pitifully.

comes to the deed and faith is now to be tested by great renunciations and heavy sacrifices, then its weakness shows itself. If a human being is seriously meditating a crime, he has already broken through the barrier of genuine pure morality: after that the first thing that stops him every time is the thought of the law^a and the police. If he shakes that off through the hope of eluding them, then the second barrier that confronts him is concern for his honour. But if he now gets over this defence as well, then, after the defeat of these two powerful resistances, one can bet a great deal against some religious dogma still having sufficient power over him to restrain him from the deed. For someone who is not deterred by close and certain dangers will hardly be held in check by remote dangers that rest merely on faith. Furthermore, it can still be objected against any good action that issued solely from religious convictions that it was not disinterested, but rather occurred out of concern for reward and punishment, and consequently has no purely moral worth. We find this insight expressed strongly in a letter by the famous Grand Duke Karl August of Weimar, where it says: 'Baron Weyhers was himself of the view that it must be a bad fellow who is good through religion, and not inclined to be so by nature. In wine there is truth^a' (*Letters to J. H. Merck*, letter 229).⁴² – Now consider by contrast the moral incentive I have expounded. Who would dare to deny for a moment that in all ages, among all peoples, in all life's circumstances, even in a state of lawlessness, even in the midst of the horrors of revolutions and wars, and in things great and small, every day and every hour, it manifests a decided and truly miraculous effectiveness, daily prevents many a wrong and calls into being many a good deed without any hope of reward and often quite unexpectedly, and that where it and it alone has been effective, all of us unconditionally grant the deed true moral worth with emotion and deep respect.

4) For boundless compassion with all living beings is the firmest and safest guarantor of moral good conduct^b and requires no casuistry. Whoever is filled with it will reliably injure no one, infringe upon no one, bring woe to no one, and rather have consideration for everyone, forgive everyone, help everyone, as much as he is able, and all his actions will bear the imprint of justice and loving kindness. By contrast, try once saying: 'This human being is virtuous, but he knows no compassion.' Or: 'He is an unjust and wicked human being; yet he is very compassionate'; then the contradiction becomes palpable. – Tastes differ; but I know of no more beautiful prayer

^a *Justiz*

^a *In vino veritas*

^b *sittliche Wohlverhalten*

than the one that ancient Indian dramas close with (as English dramas did in earlier times with one for the king). It goes: 'May all living beings remain free from pains.'

5) Even from particular characteristics it can be gathered that the true fundamental moral incentive is compassion. It is, e.g., equally as unjust to cheat a rich man as a poor man out of a hundred thalers by means of legal tricks that involve no danger: but the reproaches of conscience and the blame from impartial witnesses will turn out much louder and more vehement in the second case; thus Aristotle already says: 'it is more terrible to wrong the unfortunate than the fortunate',^c *Problems*, XXXIX, 2.⁴³ On the other hand the reproaches will be even quieter than in the first case if it is a state treasury that one has defrauded, for this cannot be an object of compassion. It can be seen that it is not immediately the infringement of right that provides the material for one's own blame and that of others, but rather the suffering that is brought upon others in the process. The mere infringement of right as such, e.g. the one above against the state treasury, will indeed also be disapproved of by conscience and by others, but only in so far as the maxim of respecting *every* right, which makes the truly honest man, is thereby broken; so it will be disapproved of mediately and to a lesser degree. However, if it was a state treasury *entrusted to one's care*, then the case is a completely different one, in that the concept of *double injustice* established above applies here with its specific properties.

237 On what has been discussed here rests the fact that the heaviest reproach made everywhere against greedy extortionists and legal rogues is that they have snatched the goods of widows and orphans for themselves: precisely because these people, being entirely helpless, should have aroused even more compassion than others. So it is the total lack of this that proves a human being's wickedness.

6) Compassion lies at the basis of loving kindness even more obviously than it does at the basis of justice. No one will receive evidence of genuine loving kindness from others so long as things are going well for him in every respect. Although the happy man can experience the good will of his relatives and friends in many ways, expressions of that pure, disinterested, objective sympathy for someone else's condition and fate that are the effect of loving kindness are reserved for one who is suffering in some respect or other. For we do not sympathize with the happy one *as such*; rather he

^c δεινότερον δέ ἐστι τὸν ἀτυχοῦντα, ἢ τὸν εὐτυχοῦντα, ἄδικεῖν (*iniquius autem est, injuriam homini infortunato, quam fortunato, intulisse*) [950b3–4: the work *Problems* is a traditional part of the Aristotelian corpus whose authorship has been seriously doubted]

remains *as such* foreign to our heart: 'let him have his own for himself'.^a In fact, if he has great advantage over others, he will provoke envy, which threatens to transform itself into *schadenfreude* should he one day fall from the height of happiness. However, this threat mostly remains unfulfilled and it does not come to the Sophocleian 'our enemies exult'.^b For as soon as the happy man falls, there occurs in the hearts of the rest a great change of form, which is instructive for our study. It now becomes apparent first and foremost what kind of concern it was that the friends of his happiness had for him: 'Once the wine-jars are empty, friends disperse with the dregs.'^c But, on the other hand, what he feared more than unhappiness itself and what he found unbearable to think of, the rejoicing of those who envied his happiness, the mocking laughter of *schadenfreude*, mostly fails to happen: envy is reconciled, it has disappeared along with its cause, and the compassion that now takes its place gives birth to loving kindness. The enviers and enemies of a happy man have often transformed themselves upon his fall into caring, consoling and helping friends. Who has not experienced something of the kind in himself, at least in weaker degrees, and has not seen with surprise, when hit by a misfortune, that those who hitherto betrayed the greatest coldness and even ill-will towards him now come to his side with unfeigned sympathy? For unhappiness is the condition of compassion and compassion the source of loving kindness. – Related to this observation is the remark that nothing mollifies our anger so quickly, even when it is just, than its being said of its object: 'He is an unhappy man.' For what rain is to fire, compassion is to anger. For this reason I advise anyone who would prefer not having something to regret, if he is inflamed with anger towards somebody, to think of inflicting a great suffering on him – he should vividly imagine that he had inflicted it on him already, see him now wrestling with his mental or bodily pains, or his distress and misery, and have to say to himself: that is my work. If anything is capable of damping down his anger, it is this. For compassion is the correct antidote to anger, and by means of that trick against oneself one anticipates, while there is still time,

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compassion, whose voice makes its laws heard when we take revenge^a. (Voltaire, *Sémiramis*, act 5, sc. 6.)

^a *habeat sibi sua*

^b γελῶσι δ' ἐχθροί (*rident inimici*) [Sophocles, *Electra*, line 1153]

^c *diffugiunt cadis cum faece siccatis amici* [Horace, *Odes*, I, 35, 26]

^a

*la pitié, dont la voix,
Alors qu'on est vengé, fait entendre ses lois.*

Our spiteful mood towards others is displaced by nothing so easily as when we take up a viewpoint from which they make a claim on our compassion. – Even the fact that parents as a rule love the sickly child most rests on the fact of his continually arousing compassion.⁴⁴

7) The moral incentive I have expounded further proves itself as the genuine one through the fact that it also takes *animals* into its protection, who are cared for so irresponsibly badly in the other European moral systems. The alleged lack of rights^b of animals, the delusion that our actions towards them are without moral significance, or, as it goes in the language of those morals, that there are no duties towards animals, is simply an outrageous crudity and barbarism of the Occident whose source lies in Judaism. In philosophy it rests on the assumption, in spite of all evidence, of the total differentiation between human being and animal, which, as is well known, was enunciated in the most decisive and strident way by *Descartes*,
 239 as a necessary consequence of his errors. For as the Cartesian–Leibnizian–Wolffian philosophy was building up rational psychology out of abstract concepts and constructed an immortal ‘rational soul’,^c the natural claims of the animal world manifestly ran counter to this exclusive privilege and patent of immortality for the human species, and nature, as on all such occasions, silently submitted its protest. Now the philosophers, troubled by their intellectual conscience, had to seek to support rational psychology by means of empirical psychology and hence had to make efforts to open up a monstrous chasm, an immeasurable distance between human being and animal, so as to present them as fundamentally distinct. *Boileau* already mocks such efforts:

Do the animals have universities?

Do we see the flowering of their four faculties?^{d, 45}

In the end the animals were not supposed to be able even to distinguish themselves from the external world and to have no consciousness of themselves, no I! Against such fatuous claims one only has to point to the boundless egoism that dwells in every animal, even the smallest and least, which adequately proves how much animals are conscious of their I as opposed to the world or the not-I. If this sort of Cartesian found himself between the claws of a tiger, he would become aware in the clearest manner

^b *Rechtlosigkeit*

^c *anima rationalis*

^d

Les animaux ont-ils des universités?

Voit-on fleurir chez eux des quatre facultés? [*Satires*, VIII, 165]

what a sharp distinction such a creature places between I and not-I. Corresponding to such sophistications of philosophers we find on the popular path the peculiarity of some languages, particularly the German, that they have quite specific words for the eating, drinking, being pregnant, giving birth, dying and corpses of animals, so as not to have to use those that designate these acts in human beings, and thus to conceal the complete identity of the thing beneath the diversity of the words. Since the ancient languages are not acquainted with such a duplicity of terms, but designate the same thing with the same words without embarrassment, that miserable trick is without doubt the work of European priestliness,^a which in its profanity thinks it cannot go far enough in its denial and defamation of the eternal essence that lives in all animals; whereby it has laid down the basis for the hardness and cruelty to animals that is customary in Europe, and that a high Asiatic can regard only with just abhorrence. We do not encounter that unworthy trick in the English language, doubtless because the Saxons, as they conquered England, were not yet Christians. On the other hand there is an analogue of it in the peculiarity that in English all animals are of neuter gender^b and so are represented by the pronoun *it*, just as lifeless things – which comes out as totally outrageous, especially in the case of primates, such as dogs, monkeys etc., and is unmistakably a priestly ruse to degrade animals to things.⁴⁶ The ancient Egyptians, whose whole life was dedicated to religious ends, interred the mummies of human beings and those of ibises, crocodiles etc. in the same tombs: but in Europe it is an abomination and a crime if the faithful dog is buried next to his master's resting place, where from time to time he awaited his own death, out of a loyalty and attachment of a kind not found in the human race.⁴⁷ – Nothing leads us more decisively to the recognition of the identity of what is essential in the appearance of the animal and that of the human being, than involvement with zoology and anatomy: so what should we say when in this day and age (1839) an over-pious zootomist^c has the impudence to urge a radical difference between human beings and animals, and goes so far as to attack and denigrate honest zoologists who, far from all priestery, eye-service and Tartuffianism, pursue their path under the guidance of nature and truth?

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^a *Pfaffenschaft*

^b *generis neutrius*

^c [The reference is to Rudolph Wagner, physiologist and anthropologist, professor at Erlangen and Göttingen. See Schopenhauer's letter to Frauenstädt, 12 Sept. 1852, in *GB*, 294 (and notes on 570–1)]

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Anyone must truly be blind in all senses, or totally chloroformed by the Judaic stench,^a not to recognize that⁴⁸ what is essential and foremost in the animal and in the human being is the same, and that what distinguishes the two does not reside in what is primary, in the principle, in the original,^b in the inner essence, in the core of both appearances, which in the one case as in the other is *the will* of the individual, but rather solely in what is secondary, in the intellect, in the degree of the cognitive faculty, which in the human being is far higher because of the additional capacity for *abstract* cognition, called *reason* – though demonstrably only because of a greater cerebral development, in other words the somatic difference of one single part, the brain, and in terms of its quantity in particular. By contrast, what is similar between animal and human, both psychologically^c and somatically, is incomparably more. We have to remind such an occidental, judaicized⁴⁹ despiser of animals and idolater of reason that, just as *he* was suckled by his mother, so too was the dog by *his* mother. That even *Kant* fell into this fault of his contemporaries and compatriots is a charge I have made above. That the morals of Christianity pay no regard to animals is a deficiency in them that it is better to admit than to perpetuate, and something we must be all the more surprised at, given that these morals otherwise show the greatest agreement with those of Brahmanism and Buddhism, merely being less strongly expressed and not carried through to extremes; thus we can scarcely doubt that, as with the idea of a god become human being (avatar), they stem from India and may have come to Judaea by way of Egypt – so that Christianity would be a reflection of the original light of India from the ruins of Egypt, which, however, fell unfortunately on Jewish soil. As a nice *symbol* of the deficiency we have just rebuked in Christian morals, despite its otherwise great agreement with Indian morals, we could take the circumstance that John the Baptist appears wholly in the manner of an Indian sannyasi, yet at the same time – dressed in an animal skin! which, as is well known, would be an abomination to any Hindu, since the Royal Society in Calcutta even acquired its copy of the Vedas only under the promise that it would not have it bound in leather according to the European manner: hence it can be found in its library bound in silk. A similar, characteristic contrast is provided by the gospel story of Peter's draught of fish, which the Saviour, by a miracle, blesses in such measure that the boats become overfilled with fish to the point of sinking (Luke 5), compared with the story of Pythagoras the initiate in Egyptian

^a *foetor Judaicus*

^b *im Archäus*

^c *psychisch*

wisdom, who purchases the fishermen's catch from them while the net is still under the water, so as to grant all the caught fish their freedom afterwards (Apuleius, *Discourse On Magic*, p. 36^a).⁵⁰ – Compassion for animals goes together with goodness of character so precisely that we can confidently assert that anyone who is cruel to animals cannot be a good human being. This compassion also shows that it is sprung from the same source as the virtue that is to be practised towards human beings. Thus, e.g., when persons of refined feeling recall that in a foul mood, in anger, or inflamed by wine, they mistreated their dog, their horse, their monkey in an undeserved or unnecessary way, or to excess, they sense the same remorse, the same dissatisfaction with themselves as is sensed at the recollection of injustice performed against human beings, where it is called the voice of punishing conscience. I recall having read that an Englishman who had shot a monkey on a hunt in India had not been able to forget the look the monkey gave him in dying, and never shot at monkeys again after that. Likewise William Harris, a true Nimrod, who in 1836 and 1837 travelled deep into the interior of Africa solely to enjoy the pleasures of the hunt. In the book of his travels that appeared in Bombay in 1838 he recounts that after he had bagged the first elephant, which was a female, and sought out the fallen animal the following morning, all other elephants had fled the area: only the fallen elephant's young one had spent the night with its dead mother, and now, forgetting all fear, it came towards the hunters giving the liveliest and clearest testimony of its inconsolable misery, and embraced them with its little trunk so as to call on their help. Then, says Harris, true remorse for his deed seized him and it felt to him as if he had committed a murder. We see this fine-feeling English nation distinguished before all others by a striking compassion for animals that manifests itself at every opportunity and has had the power to move the nation, despite the 'cold superstition'^b that otherwise degrades it, to fill by legislation the loophole that religion leaves in morals. For precisely this loophole is the cause of animal protection societies being needed in Europe and America, which themselves can be effective only with the help of the law and the police. In Asia the religions grant animals adequate protection, so there no one thinks of societies of this sort. Meanwhile in Europe too the sense of the rights of animals is awakening more and more, in proportion as the strange conceptions of an animal world come into existence merely for the benefit and amusement of human beings, as a consequence of which

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^a *Apul. de magia*, p. 36. Bip. [Schopenhauer refers to the Bipont edition]

^b [This according to Prince Pückler, in *Briefe eines Verstorbenen* (*Letters of a Dead Man*)]

they treat animals just as things, are gradually fading and disappearing. For these are the source of the crude and inconsiderate treatment of animals in Europe, and I have shown their origin in the Old Testament in the second volume of *Parerga*, §177.⁵¹ To the glory of the English let it also be said that it was in their case that the law first seriously took animals into protection against cruel treatment, and that the villain must really pay the penalty for having committed a crime against animals, even if they belong to him.⁵² Indeed, not content with that, there exists in London a voluntarily convened society, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which, with a significant expenditure, does a great deal to work against the torture of animals in a private capacity. Its emissaries keep watch secretly, to emerge later as denouncers of those who torment sensate beings that lack language, and their presence is to be feared everywhere.* At steep
 244 bridges in London the Society keeps a team of horses which are put in front of any heavily loaded carriage free of charge. Is that not fine? Does it not compel our applause as much as a good deed towards human beings? Also, for their part the Philanthropic Society in London put up a prize of 30 pounds in 1837 for the best exposition of moral grounds against the torment of animals, though they were supposed to be taken chiefly from Christianity, which frankly made the task harder: the prize was awarded to

* How seriously the matter is taken is shown by the following very fresh example that I translate from the *Birmingham Journal* of December 1839: 'Arrest of a society of 84 dog-fighters. – Since it had been discovered that a dog-fight was to take place according to plan in Fox Street in Birmingham, the Society of the Friends of Animals took preventive measures to ensure the help of the police, of whom a strong detachment marched to the site of the fight and, as soon as they were admitted, arrested the entire company present. These participants were then bound together in pairs with handcuffs and all of them collected in the middle with a long rope: in this way they were led to the police station, where the mayor held a sitting with the magistrate. The two ring-leaders were each sentenced to a punishment of 1 pound sterling together with 8½ shillings costs, and in case of non-payment 14 days' hard labour in prison. The rest were released.' – The dandies, who tend never to be missing from such noble pleasures, will have looked very embarrassed in the procession. – But we find an even more strict example from recent days in the *Times* of 6 April 1855, p. 6, one moreover held up as such by the newspaper itself. For it reports the case that came to court, of the daughter of a very well-to-do Scottish baronet who had tormented her horse extremely cruelly, with club and knife, for which she was sentenced to a punishment of 5 pounds sterling. But a girl of that kind thinks nothing of that, and would actually have skipped away from there unpunished, had not the *Times* followed up with the correct, sensitive chastisement, by displaying the girl's first and last name twice in large letters and continuing: 'We cannot but say that a few months' imprisonment, with a few private whippings administered by the stoutest woman in Hampshire, would have constituted a much more fitting punishment for Miss *N. N.* [in fact Emilie Frances Gordon]. Such a wretch is not entitled to privileges and honour due to her sex: we cannot think of her as a woman.'⁵³ – I dedicate these newspaper reports especially to the associations against the torture of animals now established in Germany, so that they see how one must attack the issue if anything is to come of it; though I pay my full acknowledgement to the praiseworthy zeal of Councillor Perner in Munich who has devoted himself entirely to this branch of beneficence and spread the initiative for it throughout the whole of Germany.⁵⁴

Mr. Macnamara in 1839. In Philadelphia there exists, to similar ends, an Animals Friends Society. T. Forster (an Englishman) dedicated his book *Philozoia, moral reflections on the actual condition of animals and the means of improving the same* (Brussels, 1839) to the president of that society. The book is original and well written. As an Englishman, the author naturally seeks to rest his admonitions to humane treatment of animals on the Bible, yet strays all over the place; so that he finally resorts to the argument that Jesus Christ was after all born in the stable with the little oxen and asses, which is supposed to indicate symbolically that we have to regard animals as our brothers and treat them accordingly. – Everything adduced here gives evidence that the moral chord in question is gradually beginning to sound in the occidental world as well. Incidentally, compassion for animals must not lead so far that we, like the Brahmans, should have to refrain from animal food. This rests on the fact that in nature the capacity for suffering keeps pace with intelligence; which is why human beings would suffer more by renouncing animal food, especially in the North, than animals would by a quick and always unforeseen death, which should, however, be alleviated still more by means of chloroform. On the other hand, without animal food the human race would not even be able to survive in the North.⁵⁵ By the same criterion human beings also have animals to work for them, and only the excess of strain imposed on them turns into cruelty. 245

8) If for once we disregard altogether any metaphysical investigation that might perhaps be possible into the ultimate ground of that compassion from which alone non-egoistic actions can proceed, and consider it from the empirical standpoint, simply as an establishment of nature; then it will be apparent to everyone that, for the best possible alleviation of the countless sufferings of many forms to which our life is exposed and which no one escapes, and at the same time as a counter-weight to the burning egoism that fills all beings and often transforms into malice – nature could achieve nothing more effective than planting in the human heart that wondrous disposition by which the suffering of the one is felt as well^a by the other, and from which comes the voice that loudly and intelligibly calls out ‘Care!’ to this one, ‘Help!’ to that, according to what the occasion is. For certain, more was to be hoped for towards the welfare of all from the mutual assistance that arose from this source, than from a universal, abstract, strict commandment of duty resulting from certain considerations of reason and combinations of concepts. Success was to be expected all the less from the latter, given that universal propositions and abstract truths are 246

^a *mitempfunden*

wholly incomprehensible to the unrefined human being, because for him only what is concrete is something – but the whole of humanity, with the exception of an extremely small portion, was always unrefined and must remain so, because the great amount of bodily labour that is unavoidably necessary for the whole does not permit the edification of the mind. By contrast, for awakening compassion, which has been proved as the *sole source of disinterested actions and consequently as the true basis of morality*, no abstract cognition was required, but only intuitive cognition, the simple grasp of the concrete case, to which compassion responds at once without further mediation of thought.

9) We will find the following circumstance in complete agreement with the last consideration. The grounding I have given to ethics does indeed leave me without predecessors among the school-philosophers, and it is even paradoxical in relation to their doctrinal views, seeing that many of them, e.g. the Stoics (Seneca, *On Clemency*,^b II, 5), Spinoza (*Ethics*, IV, prop. 50), Kant (*Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 213/R. p. 257^c), reject and disparage compassion outright. On the other hand, my grounding has in its favour the authority of the greatest moralist of the entire modern age: for this is, without doubt, J. J. Rousseau, the profound knower of the human heart, who drew his wisdom not from books but from life, and who meant his teachings not for the professorial chair but for humanity – he, the enemy of prejudice, the pupil of nature, on whom alone it bestowed the gift of being able to moralize without being boring, because he hit upon the truth and stirred the heart. So I will allow myself to present some passages of his in corroboration of my viewpoint, having been as sparing as possible with citations up till now.

In the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*,^a p. 91 (Bipont edition), he says: ‘There is another principle which has escaped Hobbes; which, having been bestowed on mankind, to moderate, on certain occasions, the ferocity of his self-love, tempers the ardour with which he pursues his own welfare, by an *innate repugnance at seeing someone like himself suffer*. I think I need not fear contradiction in holding man to be possessed of *the only natural virtue*, which could not be denied him by the most violent detractor of human virtue. I am speaking *of compassion* etc. . . . p. 92: Mandeville well knew that, in spite of all their morals, men would never have been better than monsters, had not nature bestowed *compassion* on them to aid their reason: but he did not see that *from this quality alone flow all those*

^b *De clem[entia]*

^c [Ak. 5: 118]

^a *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* [*Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*]

social virtues, of which he denied man the possession. But what is generosity, clemency or humanity but *compassion* applied to the weak, to the guilty, or to the human species in general? Even benevolence and friendship are, if we judge rightly, only the productions of a constant compassion fixed upon a particular object: for what is desiring that another person may not suffer other than desiring that he be happy? . . . Commiseration must, in fact, be the stronger, the more *the animal looking on identifies himself with the animal that suffers.* . . . p. 94: It is then certain that compassion is a natural feeling, which, by moderating the activity of love of self in each individual, contributes to the mutual preservation of the whole species. It is this which in a state of nature supplies the place of laws, morals and virtues, with the advantage that none are tempted to disobey its gentle voice: it is this which will always prevent a sturdy savage from robbing a weak child or a feeble old man of the sustenance they may have acquired with pain, if he hopes to be able to provide for himself by other means: it is this which, instead of inculcating that sublime maxim of rational justice “Do to others as you would have them do unto you”, inspires all men with that other maxim of natural goodness, much less perfect indeed, but perhaps more useful “Do good to yourself with as little evil as possible to others”. In a word, it is *rather in this natural feeling than in any subtle arguments that we must look for the cause of that repugnance, which every man would experience in doing evil,* even independently of the maxims of education.”^b Compare

^b *Il y a un autre principe, que Hobbes n'a point aperçu, et qui ayant été donné à l'homme pour adoucir, en certaines circonstances, la férocité de son amour-propre, tempère l'ardeur qu'il a pour son bien-être par une répugnance innée à voir souffrir son semblable. Je ne crois pas avoir aucune contradiction à craindre en accordant à l'homme la seule vertu naturelle qu'il ait été forcé de reconnaître le détracteur le plus outré des vertus humaines. Je parle de la pitié etc. — S. 92: Mandeville a bien senti qu'avec toute leur morale les hommes n'eussent jamais été que des monstres, si la nature ne leur eut donné la pitié à l'appui de la raison: mais il n'a pas vu, que de cette seule qualité découlent toutes les vertus sociales, qu'il veut disputer aux hommes. En effet qu'est-ce que la générosité, la clémence, l'humanité, sinon la pitié appliquée aux faibles, aux coupables, ou à l'espèce humaine en général: La bienveillance et l'amitié même sont, à le bien prendre, des productions d'une pitié constante, fixée sur un objet particulier; car désirer que quelqu'un ne souffre point, qu'est-ce autre-chose, que désirer qu'il soit heureux? — La commiseration sera d'autant plus énergique, que l'animal spectateur s'identifiera plus intimement avec l'animal souffrant. — S. 94: Il est donc bien certain, que la pitié est un sentiment naturel, qui, modérant dans chaque individu l'amour de soi-même, concourt à la conservation mutuelle de toute l'espèce. C'est elle, qui dans l'état de nature, tient lieu de lois, de mœurs et de vertus, avec cet avantage, que nul ne sera tenté de désobéir à sa douce voix: c'est elle, qui détournera tout sauvage robuste d'enlever à un faible enfant, ou à un vieillard infirme sa subsistance acquise avec peine, si lui même espère pouvoir trouver la sienne ailleurs: c'est elle, qui au lieu de cette maxime sublime de justice raisonnée “fais à autrui comme tu veux qu'on te fasse”, inspire à tous les hommes cette autre maxime de bonté naturelle, bien moins parfaite, mais plus utile peut-être que la précédente “fais ton bien avec le moindre mal d'autrui qu'il est possible”. C'est, en un mot, dans ce sentiment naturel plutôt, que dans les arguments subtils, qu'il faut chercher la cause de la répugnance qu'éprouverait tout homme à mal faire, même indépendamment des maximes de l'éducation.* [Emphasis is Schopenhauer's throughout, and he has also made some unmarked omissions of text]

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with this what he says in *Emile*, Book IV, pp. 115–20 (Bipont edition), where among other things we find: ‘Indeed, how can we let ourselves be stirred by compassion unless we go outside ourselves, and *identify ourselves with the suffering animal, by leaving, so to speak, our being and taking his?* We suffer only in so far as we judge that he suffers; *it is not in ourselves, it is in him that we suffer* . . . *present to the young man* objects on which the expansive force of his heart may take effect, objects which dilate it, which extend it to other beings, which make him *find himself outside himself*; carefully remove everything that narrows, concentrates, and strengthens the power of *the human I* etc.’^a

Deprived, as I have said, of authorities on the part of the Schools, I add that the *Chinese* assume five cardinal virtues (*chang*), among which compassion (*sin*) heads the list. The remaining four are: justice, politeness, wisdom and uprightness.* Correspondingly among the Hindus also we see compassion for human beings and animals occupying first place among the virtues that deceased princes are famed for on memorial plaques erected to their memory. In Athens compassion had an altar in the forum: ‘The Athenians have an altar to Compassion in the marketplace, to whom more than all the gods the Athenians uniquely among the Greeks pay tribute, as beneficial to human life and the changes in things’^b (Pausanias I, 17, 1). Lucian also mentions this altar in *Timon*, §99. – A saying of Phocion preserved for us by Stobaeus portrays compassion as the holiest of all things in the human being: ‘The altar is not to be taken from the temple, nor compassion from human nature.’^c In the *Wisdom of the Indians*,^d which

* *Journal de Asiatique*, vol. 9, p. 62, to be compared with *Meng-Tseu* [Mencius], ed. Stan. Julien, 1824, Book I, §45; also *Meng Tseu* in *Livres sacrés de l’Orient* [Sacred Books of the Orient] by Pauthier, p. 281.

^a *En effet, comment nous laissons-nous émuvoir à la pitié, si ce n’est en nous transportant hors de nous et en nous identifiant avec l’animal souffrant; en quittant, pour ainsi dire, notre être, pour prendre le sien? Nous ne souffrons qu’autant que nous jugeons qu’il souffre: ce n’est pas dans nous, c’est dans lui, que nous souffrons. — — offrir au jeune homme des objets, sur lesquels puisse agir la force expansive de son cœur, qui le dilate, qui l’étendent sur les autres êtres, qui le fassent partout se retrouver hors de lui; écarter avec soin ceux, qui le resserrent, le concentrent, et tendent le ressort du moi humain etc.* [Emphasis is Schopenhauer’s throughout, and he has also made some unmarked omissions of text]

^b Ἀθηναίοις δὲ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ ἐστὶ Ἑλέου βωμός, ᾧ μάλιστα θεῶν, ἐς ἀνθρώπινον βίον καὶ μεταβολὰς πραγμάτων ὅτι ὠφέλιμος, μόνοι τιμὰς Ἑλλήνων νέμουσιν Ἀθηναῖοι. (*Atheniensibus in foro commiserationis ara est, quippe cui, inter omnes Deos, vitam humanam et mutationem rerum maxime adjuvanti, soli inter Graecos, honores tribuunt Athenienses*)

^c οὔτε ἐξ ἱεροῦ βωμόν, οὔτε ἐκ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως ἀφαιρετέον τὸν ἔλεον (*nec aram e fano, nec commiserationem e vita humana tollendum est*) [*Anthology*, I, 31]

^d *Sapientia Indorum*

is a translation of the Pancha Tantra, we find (sect. 3, p. 220): ‘It is said that pity is the first of the virtues.’^c It can be seen that all ages and lands have recognized the source of morality perfectly well; only Europe has not – for which the Judaic stench^f is solely to blame that here permeates all and all. And then there simply must be a commandment of duty, a moral law, an imperative, in short an order and command that is obeyed; they do not diverge from this and are unwilling to see that this kind of thing always has egoism alone as its basis. In isolated and reflective cases the felt truth has indeed announced itself: thus with Rousseau, as presented above; and Lessing too, in a letter of 1756, says: ‘The most compassionate human being is the best human being, the most disposed to all social virtues and to all sorts of magnanimity.’^g⁵⁶

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§20 On the ethical difference of characters

The final question, answering which belongs to the completeness of the foundation of ethics I have presented, is this: What does the very great difference in the moral conduct of human beings rest on? If compassion is the fundamental incentive of all genuine, i.e. disinterested justice and loving kindness, why is the one and not the other moved by it? – Is ethics perhaps capable, on uncovering the moral incentive, of also putting it into action?^g Can it re-fashion the hard-hearted human being into a compassionate one, and thereby into a just and loving, kind one? – Certainly not: the difference of characters is inborn and ineradicable. The malicious man’s malice is born in him as the venomous teeth and venom sac are in the snake; and he can alter it no more than the snake. ‘Willing is not taught,’ said the educator of Nero.^a Plato investigates thoroughly in the *Meno* whether virtue can be taught or not: he adduces a passage in Theognis:

but by teaching you will never make a bad man good.^b

and arrives at the result: ‘virtue would be neither by nature nor taught, but comes to those who possess it as a gift from the gods which is not

^c Λέγεται γὰρ, ὡς πρώτη τῶν ἀρετῶν ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη (*princeps virtutum misericordia censetur*)

^f *foetor Judaicus*

^g *Thätigkeit*

^a *Velle non discitur* [Seneca, *Letters*, 81, 14]

^b

ἀλλὰ διδάσκων

Οὔποτε ποιήσεις τὸν κακὸν ἀνδρὶ ἀγαθόν.

(*sed docendo nunquam ex malo bonum hominem facies*) [*Meno* 96a]

250 accompanied by understanding^c – in which the difference between ‘by nature’^d and ‘as a gift from the gods’^e seems to me to designate roughly that between physical and metaphysical. The father of ethics, *Socrates*, had already claimed, according to *Aristotle’s* account: ‘to be good or bad does not rest with us to come about’ (*Ethica magna*, I, 9).^f Aristotle himself expresses himself in the same sense: ‘For each of us seems to possess his type of character to some extent by nature, since we are just, brave, prone to temperance, or have another feature, immediately from birth.’^g (*Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, 13.) Similarly we find this conviction pronounced very decisively in the fragments of the Pythagorean Archytas – which are at any rate very ancient, although perhaps not genuine – which Stobaeus has preserved for us in his *Anthology*,^h I, §77.⁷ They are also printed in *Short Sententious and Moral Works of the Greeks*, edited by Orelli,ⁱ vol. 2, p. 240. So it says there, in the Dorian dialect: ‘For the virtues that employ reason and demonstration it is right to call sciences; but the virtue that is ethical and best we rather call by the name of a *habit of that part of the mind that lacks reason*, on the basis of which we are said to have a certain character, such as generous, just, and temperate.’^j If one surveys the several virtues and vices that Aristotle placed together for a brief summary in his book *On Virtues and Vices*,^k one will find that all of them can be thought of only as inborn properties, and indeed can be genuine only as such. If instead they were assumed voluntarily^l as a consequence of rational deliberation,

^c ἀρετὴ ἂν εἴη οὔτε φύσει, οὔτε διδακτόν. ἀλλὰ θεῖα μοῖρα παραγιγνομένη, ἄνευ νοῦ, οἷς ἂν παραγίγηται (*virtus utique nec doctrina, neque natura nobis aderit; verum divina sorte, absque mente, in eum, qui illam sortitus fuerit, influet*) [*Meno* 99c]

^d φύσει

^e θεῖα μοῖρα

^f οὐκ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν γενέσθαι τὸ σπουδαῖος εἶναι, ἢ φαύλους (*in nostra potestate non est, bonos, aut malos esse*) [1187a7: *Magna Moralia*, a work traditionally part of the Aristotelian corpus, whose authorship has been disputed]

^g πᾶσι γὰρ δοκεῖ ἕκαστα τῶν ἡθῶν ὑπάρχειν φύσει πως· καὶ γὰρ δίκαιοι, καὶ σωφρονικοὶ [καὶ ἀνδρείοι], καὶ ἅλλα ἔχομεν εὐθὺς ἐκ γενετῆς (*Singuli enim mores in omnibus hominibus quodammodo videntur inesse natura: namque ad iustitiam, temperantiam, fortitudinem, ceterasque apti atque habiles sumus, cum primum nascimur*) [1144b4: Schopenhauer omits καὶ ἀνδρείοι (‘and brave’) in his quotation of the Greek, but renders it in Latin by *fortitudinem*]

^h *Florilegium* [Schopenhauer refers to an edition by Meineke]

ⁱ *Opusculis Graecorum [veterum] sententiosis et moralibus, edente Orellio* [1819]

^j Τὰς γὰρ λόγοις καὶ ἀποδείξεσιν ποτιχρωμένας ἀρετὰς δέον ἐπιστάμας ποταγορεῦεν, ἀρετὰν δέ, τὰν ἡσικόν καὶ βελτίστην ἐξῆν τῷ ἀλόγῳ μέρει τῶν ψυχῶν, καὶ ἂν καὶ ποιοὶ τινες ἡμὲν λεγόμεθα κατὰ τὸ ἥθος, οἷον ἐλευθέριοι, δίκαιοι καὶ σώφρονες. (*Eas enim, quae ratione et demonstratione utuntur, virtutes fas est, scientias appellare; virtutis autem nomine intelligemus moralem et optimum animi partis ratione carentis habitum, secundum quem qualitatem aliquam moralem habere dicimus, vocamusque v. c. liberales, iusti et temperantes.*)

^k *de virtutibus et vitiis* [a work in the traditional Aristotelian corpus, but regarded as spurious]

^l willkürlich

they would really amount to *dissemblance* and would be unguine; and so their endurance and reliability under the stress of circumstances could not be counted upon at all. The situation is no different in the case of the virtue of loving kindness which is absent in Aristotle, as in all the ancients. So in the same sense, though he maintains his sceptical tone, *Montaigne* says: 'Could it be true that in order to be completely good we have to be so through an occult, natural and universal property, without law, without reason, without example?'^m (Book II, ch. 11). *Lichtenberg*, however, says simply: 'All virtue from design is not worth much. Feeling, or habit is the thing.' (*Miscellaneous Writings*, 'Moral observations'.^a) But even the original teaching of Christianity concurs with this viewpoint, saying in the Sermon on the Mount itself, in Luke ch. 6, v. 45: 'A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil',^b following the figurative explanation of the matter in the two preceding verses, with the fruit that always comes out in accordance with the tree.⁵⁸

But it was *Kant* who first fully clarified this important point, by his great doctrine that at the basis of the *empirical character* that presents itself, as an appearance, in time and in a plurality of actions, there lies the *intelligible character*, which is the constitution of the thing in itself of that appearance, and hence independent of space and time, plurality and alteration. It is solely through this that we can explain the rigid unalterability of characters, which is familiar to everyone of experience and so astonishing, and which has always triumphantly held up reality and experience against the promises of an ethics that wishes to improve human beings morally and talks of progress in virtue, and which has thereby proved that virtue is inborn and not acquired through preaching.⁵⁹ If character, as the original thing, were not unalterable and thus inaccessible to all improvement by way of correction through cognition; if, moreover, as that shallow ethics claims, an improvement of character by means of morals and hence 'a constant progress towards the good' were possible – then, if all the many religious institutions and moralizing efforts were not to have failed in their purpose, the older half of humanity would have to be, at least on average, significantly

^m *Seroit-il vrai, que pour être bon tout-à-fait, il nous le faille être par occulte, naturelle et universelle propriété, sans loi, sans raison, sans exemple?*

^a *Vermischte Schriften*, 'Moralische Bemerkungen'

^b ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν (*homo bonus ex bono animi sui thesauro profert bonum, malusque ex malo animi sui thesauro profert malum*)

better than the younger half. But there is so little trace of that that we hope, conversely, for something good from young people rather than from the old, who have become worse through experience. It can indeed come about that in old age one human being appears somewhat better and another worse than he was in his youth: but this is simply because in old age, as a consequence of more mature cognition, corrected many times over, the character emerges purer and clearer, whereas in youth lack of knowledge, errors and chimaeras now pushed false motives to the fore, now concealed real ones – as follows from what was said under 3) in the preceding essay, pp. 50ff.^{c,60} – The fact that more young people than old are found among punished criminals comes from the fact that, where a disposition to deeds of that sort resides in the character, it soon finds the occasion to come forth as a deed, and reaches its goal, galley or gallows: and conversely, anyone whom the occasions of a long life have not been able to move to crime will not easily seize upon motives to it later on. So the true ground of the respect paid to old age seems to me to lie in the fact that an old man has stood the test of a long life and maintained his integrity: for this is the condition of such respect. – In real life, in accordance with this view, people have never let themselves be confused by those promises of moral theorists, but instead have never trusted someone again who has once proved bad, and have always looked with confidence to the noble-mindedness of someone who has once given evidence of it, whatever may have altered since. *Operari sequitur esse*^a is a fruitful proposition of Scholasticism: every thing in the world has effects according to its unalterable constitution, which makes up its being,^b its *essentia*:^c the same also for a human being. As someone *is*, so will he, so must he act, and the *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*^d is an invention from the childhood of philosophy long ago exploded, which some old women in doctors' hoods may nonetheless still burden themselves with.

253 The three fundamental ethical incentives of human beings, egoism, malice, compassion, are present in each one in different and incredibly diverse proportions. According to the manner of this, the motives will have an effect upon him and the actions take place. Only egoistic motives will have power^e over an egoistic character, and those that persuade him to

^c [pp. 70–2 above]

^a [acting follows from being]

^b *Wesen*

^c [essence]

^d [free choice of indifference]

^e *Gewalt*

compassion or malice will not be a match for them: he will no more sacrifice his own interest to take revenge on his enemy than he will to help his friend. Another, who is highly receptive to malicious motives, will often not shy away from great disadvantage of his own in order to harm others. For there are characters that find in causing someone else's suffering a pleasure that outweighs their own pleasure of the same magnitude: 'neglecting himself while he may harm another'^f (Seneca, *On Anger*,^g I, 1). They enter with passionate joy into a fight in which they expect to receive injuries just as great as those they deal out: they will even, with premeditation, murder someone who has caused them an ill, and murder themselves straight afterwards to escape punishment, as experience has often shown. By contrast, *goodness of heart* consists in a deeply felt universal compassion for all that has life, but in the first place for human beings; because receptivity to suffering keeps pace with the increase in intelligence, so the countless mental and bodily sufferings of human beings make a much stronger claim on compassion than the merely bodily pain of animals, which even there is duller. Consequently goodness of character will first restrain from any injury to the other, whatever it may consist in, but then will also summon to help wherever someone else's suffering presents itself. And in this too it can go just as far as with malice in the opposite direction, namely to the extent that characters of rare goodness can take someone else's suffering to heart more than their own, and thus make sacrifices for others, through which they suffer more than the one they helped suffered before. Where several or indeed many can be helped by it, they will, if required, sacrifice themselves completely: as with Arnold von Winkelried. Johannes von Müller (*World History*,^a Book 10, ch. 10) tells the story of *Paulinus*, Bishop of Nola in the 5th Century during the invasion of the Vandals into Italy from Africa: 'After he had given as ransom for prisoners all the treasures of the church, his own means and those of his friends, and he saw the lamentation of a widow whose only son had been led away, he offered himself up to bondage in his place. For whoever was of a good age and did not fall to the sword was taken captive to Carthage.'

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In accordance with this incredibly great inborn and original difference, everyone will be predominantly provoked only by *those* motives for which he has overwhelming receptivity: just as *one* body reacts only to acids, the other only to alkalis – and, as in the latter case, the former is not to be changed. The motives friendly to humanity, which are such powerful

^f *dum alteri noceat sui negligens*

^g *De ira*

^a *Weltgeschichte*

impulses for the good character, have as such no influence over someone who is receptive solely to egoistic motives. Should we nonetheless wish to bring him to actions that are friendly to humanity, it can happen only by making the false pretence that alleviating someone else's suffering is *mediately*, in some way or other, *to his own advantage* (just as most moral teachings are really diverse attempts in this manner). But in this way his will is merely misled, not improved. For a real improvement it would be required that we transform the whole nature of his receptivity to motives, thus, e.g. make it for one man that someone else's suffering was no longer indifferent, for another that causing it was no longer a pleasure, or for a third that every increase in his own well-being, even the slightest, did not far outweigh all motives of other kinds and make them ineffective. But this is much more surely impossible than our being able to transform lead into gold. For it would require that we, as it were, inverted the human being's heart in his body, re-shaped what is deepest inside him.^b On the contrary, all that we are able to do is to enlighten the *head*, to correct *insight*, to bring the human being to a more correct apprehension of what is objectively present, of the true circumstances of life. But in doing this nothing further is achieved than the constitution of his will laying itself open to view more consistently, clearly and decisively, expressing itself unfalsified. For, just as many good actions rest on false motives, on well-meaning pretences of an advantage of one's own to be gained by them in this world or in that, many misdeeds also rest merely on false cognition of the circumstances of human life. The American penitentiary system is based on this: it does not intend to improve the *heart* of the criminal, but merely to set his *head* to rights, so that he reaches the insight that work and honesty are a safer, and indeed an easier route to his own well-being than roguishness.^a

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Legality can be coerced by motives, but not *morality*: one can modify *acting*, but not *willing* proper, to which alone moral worth pertains. One cannot alter the goal that the will strives for, but only the way on which it embarks towards it. Teaching can alter the choice of means, but not the choice of ultimate universal ends: each will sets these for itself in accordance with its original nature. One can show the egoist that by giving up small advantages he will attain greater ones; or the malicious man that causing someone else's sufferings will bring greater sufferings upon himself. But one will not persuade the egoism itself, the malice itself, out of anyone – any more than one can persuade the partiality to mice out of a cat. Even

^b *sein tief Innerstes*

^a *Spitzbüberei*

goodness of character too can be brought to a more consistent and perfect expression of its essence by improving insight, by teaching about the circumstances of life, in other words by enlightening the head, e.g. by means of information about the more distant consequences that our doings have for others, such as the sufferings of theirs that grow, mediately and only in the course of time, out of this or that action that we did not take to be so bad; likewise by teaching about the disadvantageous consequences of many a good-hearted action, e.g. sparing a criminal; and especially about the priority that ‘Harm no one’^b consistently enjoys over ‘Help everyone’,^c and so on. In this respect there is by all means a moral education and an improving ethics: but it does not go beyond this, and the limit is easy to discern. The head is enlightened; the heart remains unimproved. What is fundamentally essential, what is decisive, in the moral as in the intellectual, and in the physical too, is what is inborn: art everywhere can only assist. Everyone is what he is, as it were ‘by the grace of God’, *jure divino*, θεῖῳ μοίρᾳ.^d

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You are in the end – *what you are*.
 Put on wigs of a million locks,
 Put your foot in yard-long socks:
You always remain what you are.^e

But for a long time I have been hearing the reader raise the question: where are guilt and desert to be found? – In answer to this I refer to §10. What would otherwise have been presented *here* already found its place there, because it has a close connection with *Kant’s* doctrine of the co-existence of freedom and necessity. So I ask that what was said there be read again here. In accordance with that, the *operari*^f is entirely necessary once the motive occurs: hence *freedom*, which manifests itself solely through *responsibility*, can reside only in the *esse*.^a Although the reproaches of conscience immediately and ostensibly concern what we *have done*, they really and fundamentally concern what we *are*, about which our deeds simply provide conclusive testimony, relating to our character as symptoms do to a disease. So in this *esse*, in what we *are*, guilt and desert must also reside. That in others which we either respect and love or

^b *Neminem laede*

^c *Omnes juva*

^d [Latin and Greek: ‘by the law of God’, ‘by the gift of God’: see the quotation from Plato, *Meno* 99e above]

^e [Goethe, *Faust* I, lines 1806–1809]

^f [acting]

^a [being]

despise and hate is not something changeable and alterable, but something enduring, existing once and for all: what they *are* – and if we turn away from them, we do not say that they have altered, rather that we were mistaken in them. In the same way the object of our satisfaction and dissatisfaction with ourselves is *what we are*, what we irrevocably are and remain: this extends even to intellectual properties, indeed to physiognomic ones. So why should guilt and desert not reside in what we *are*? The acquaintance with ourselves that becomes ever more complete, the ever growing *protocol of deeds*, is *conscience*. Our actions are the theme of conscience in the first place – either those where, because egoism or malice was leading us, we did not heed the compassion that urged us at least not to injure others, and even to give them help and support, or on the other hand those in which we followed that call, rejecting egoism and malice. Both cases show the magnitude of the *distinction* we make *between ourselves and others*. It is on *this distinction* that the degrees of morality or immorality, i.e. of justice and loving kindness and also their opposite, ultimately rest. As the memory of actions significant in this regard becomes ever richer, it completes more and more the picture of our character, our true acquaintance with ourselves. But out of this grows satisfaction or dissatisfaction with what we *are*, i.e. to what extent egoism, malice or compassion have predominated, i.e. to what extent the distinction we have made between our own person and the rest has been greater or smaller. By the same yardstick we also judge others, whose character we come to know just as empirically as our own, only more incompletely: here there appear as praise, acclaim, respect, or blame, indignation and contempt, that which in our self-judgment manifested itself as satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which can go as far as anxiety of conscience.^b Many very commonly occurring phrases testify that the reproaches we make of others too are directed only *in the first place* towards their actions, but *properly* towards their unalterable character, and that virtue and vice are regarded as inherent, enduring properties – e.g. ‘Now I see what you are like!’ – ‘I was mistaken in you’ – ‘Now I see what you are!’^c – ‘*Voilà donc, comme tu es!*’^d – ‘That’s not how I am!’ – ‘I am not the man who would be capable of deceiving you’ and the like; and further: *les âmes bien nées*; also in Spanish, *bien nascido*; εὐγενής, εὐγένεια, for virtuous, virtue; *generosioris animi amicus*, etc.^a

^b *Gewissensangst*

^c [Schopenhauer gives the English phrase here]

^d [‘So this is what you are like!’]

^a [French: ‘well born souls’; Spanish: ‘well born’; Greek: ‘well born, good birth’; Latin: ‘a friend with a more generous soul’]

Conscience is conditioned by reason simply because it is only by means of the latter that a clear and coherent recollection is possible. It is in the nature of the matter that conscience speaks only *afterwards*, which is why it is also called *verdict-giving*^b conscience. *Beforehand* it can speak only in a non-genuine way, that is indirectly, as reflection infers from the memory of similar cases to the future disapproval of a merely projected deed. – This is as far as the ethical fact of consciousness goes: it itself remains as a metaphysical problem, which does not belong immediately to our task, but which will be touched on in the final chapter. – It is fully in tune with the recognition that conscience is simply the acquaintance with our own unalterable character arising through the mediation of our deeds, that the *receptivity* to motives of self-interest, malice and compassion that is so very different in different human beings, and upon which the entire moral worth of a human being rests, is not something explicable in terms of something else, nor something acquirable by teaching that arises in time and is alterable or even dependent on chance, but instead is inborn, unalterable and not further explicable. Accordingly the course of life itself, with all its multifarious dealings, is nothing more than the external clockface of that internal, original machinery, or the mirror in which everyone's own will, which is his core, can uniquely become manifest to his intellect.

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Anyone who makes the effort to think through properly what has been said here and in the aforementioned §10 will discover in my grounding of ethics a consistency and a well rounded wholeness that all others lack, and on the other hand an agreement with the facts of experience that they have even less. For only truth can agree through and through with itself and with nature: by contrast, all false fundamental views conflict internally with themselves and externally with experience, which submits its silent protest at every step.

Nevertheless, the fact that especially the truths expounded here at the conclusion are an outright affront to many firmly rooted prejudices and errors, namely a certain current children's-school-morals, is something I am fully conscious of, though without remorse or regret. For, first, I am here addressing not children, nor the people, but an enlightened academy, whose purely theoretical question is directed at the ultimate fundamental truths of ethics, and which expects a serious answer to a highly serious question; and secondly I consider that there can be neither privileged, nor useful, nor even harmless errors, but that every error gives rise to more harm

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^b *richtend*

than benefit. – If, on the contrary, we wanted to make prevailing prejudices the yardstick of truth or the boundary stone that its exposition was not allowed to overstep, then it would be more honest to have philosophical faculties and academies close down altogether: for what is not so ought not to seem so either.

IV TOWARDS THE METAPHYSICAL INTERPRETATION
OF THE PRIMARY ETHICAL PHENOMENON

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§21 *Explanation of this addition*

Above I have proved the moral incentive as a fact, and have shown that disinterested justice and genuine loving kindness, the two cardinal virtues on which all others rest, can issue from it alone. This is sufficient for the grounding of ethics, in so far as the latter must necessarily be supported by something factually and provably present, whether it be given in the external world or in consciousness; unless, like many of my predecessors, one simply wishes to take an abstract proposition arbitrarily and derive the ethical prescriptions from it, or, like *Kant*, proceed in the same way with a mere concept, that of *law*. The task set by the Royal Society seems to me to have been fulfilled here, since it is directed at the foundation of ethics and does not also demand a metaphysics to ground it in turn. Meanwhile I see very well that in this way the human mind^a does not yet find its ultimate satisfaction and tranquillity.^b As at the end of any inquiry and any science of reality,^c the mind stands here before a primitive phenomenon which, while it explains everything comprehended under it and following from it, nonetheless remains unexplained itself and presents itself as a riddle. So the demand for a *metaphysics* also makes itself felt here, i.e. the demand for an ultimate explanation of the primitive phenomenon as such and, if taken in its entirety, of the world. This demand also raises the question why what is present to us and understood is disposed this way and not that, and how the character of appearance we have expounded proceeds from the essence in itself of things. Indeed, in ethics the need of a metaphysical basis is all the more urgent as both philosophical and religious systems are in agreement that the ethical significance of actions must be at the same time a metaphysical one, i.e. one that stretches out beyond the mere appearance of things and so beyond all possibility of experience as well, and therefore one that stands in the closest relation with the whole existence of the world and the lot of human beings – seeing that the final summit in which the meaning of existence^d as such culminates is the ethical. This last point also proves itself from the undeniable fact that, at the approach of death, every human being's train of thought, no

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^a *Geist*^b *Beruhigung*^c *Realwissenschaft*^d *Bedeutung des Daseyns*

matter whether he has adhered to religious dogmas or not, takes on a *moral* direction and he is at pains to close the reckoning of his completed lifetime in a thoroughly *moral* respect. The testimonies of the ancients carry especial weight on this matter, because they do not stand under Christian influence. Thus I submit that we find this fact already expressed in a passage which Stobaeus (*Anthology*,^a 44, §20) has preserved for us, attributed to the ancient lawgiver Zaleucus, though according to Bentley and Heyne it originates from a Pythagorean: ‘We should keep before our eyes that point in time when the end comes to each of us and we must cease living. For all who are dying are seized by repentance as they recall the injustices they did and they vehemently wish all their deeds had been just.’^{b,61} Likewise, to recall a historical example, we see *Pericles* on his deathbed not wishing to hear anything about all his great deeds, but only that he had never brought grief upon a citizen (Plutarch, *Pericles*). To juxtapose with this a most heterogeneous case, I recall from the reports of statements before an English jury that a raw fifteen-year-old negro youth, on a ship, on the point of dying from an injury he had just sustained in a fight, hastily had all his comrades summoned to his side to ask them if he had ever offended or insulted one of them, and that he found great tranquillity when this was denied. Experience consistently teaches that dying people wish to reconcile themselves with everyone before parting. A different kind of evidence for our proposition is provided by the familiar experience that, whereas with intellectual contributions – and they could be the world’s prime master works – their originator very happily accepts a reward if only he can get it, almost everyone who has contributed something morally outstanding refuses all reward for it. This is especially the case with great moral deeds, when, e.g., someone has saved the life of one, or indeed of many, at risk of his own; in which case as a rule, even if he is poor, he accepts no reward at all, because he feels that the metaphysical worth of his action would suffer as a result. *Bürger*^c provides us with a poetic portrayal of this course of events at the end of his song of the brave man. But it mostly turns out this way in reality too, and I have frequently come across it in English newspapers.⁶² – These facts are universal and occur without distinction

^a *Florilegium* [Schopenhauer’s reference is to an edition by Meineke]

^b Δεῖ τίθεσθαι πρὸ δμμάτων τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον, ἐν ᾧ γίγνεται τὸ τέλος ἐκάστῳ τῆς ἀπολαγῆς τοῦ ζῆν. Πᾶσι γὰρ ἐμπίπτει μεταμέλεια τοῖς μέλλουσι τελευτᾶν, μεμνημένοις ὧν ἡδικήκασι, καὶ ὁρμὴ τοῦ βούλεσθαι πάντα πεπρᾶχθαι δικαίως αὐτοῖς. (*Oportet ante oculos sibi ponere punctum temporis illud, quo unicuique e vita excedendum est: omnes enim moribundos poenitentia corripit, e memoria eorum, quae injuste egerint, ac vehementer optant, omnia sibi juste peracta fuisse*)

^c [Gottfried August Bürger, jurist and poet: the relevant passage is in his *Sämmtliche Schriften* (Collected Writings), 1796, vol. 1, 207]

of religion. And because of this undeniable ethical–metaphysical tendency in life no religion could find a foothold in the world without giving an interpretation of life in this way: for it is by means of its ethical side that each religion has its established place in people’s minds. Every religion places its dogma at the basis of the moral incentive that can be felt, though not thereby comprehended, by every human being, and links it so tightly with that incentive that the two appear as inseparable: indeed, priests are at pains to make out unbelief^d and immorality as one and the same. It is on this basis that, for the believer, the unbeliever counts as identical with the morally bad, as we see in the fact that expressions such as godless, atheistic, unchristian, heretic etc. are used as synonymous with morally bad. The matter is made easy for religions by the fact that, starting from *faith*,^a they are allowed to demand this outright for their dogmas, and indeed amid threats. But philosophical systems do not have such an easy game here: so from investigating all systems it will be found that things are everywhere in an extremely bad way, not only with the grounding of ethics, but also with the point of connection between it and the given metaphysics. And yet the requirement that ethics be supported by metaphysics is indefeasible, as I have already emphasized in the introduction with the authority of *Wolff* and *Kant*.

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However, the problem of metaphysics is by so much the most difficult problem that occupies the human mind, that it is held by many thinkers to be altogether insoluble. For me there is in the present case the quite specific additional disadvantage which the form of a detached monograph brings along with it, namely that I am not permitted to start from a determinate metaphysical system that I adhere to; because I would either have to expound it, which would be much too long-winded, or assume it as given and certain, which would be extremely awkward. From this it follows again that I am no more permitted to apply the synthetic method here than I was in what went above, but only the analytic method, i.e. I have to move not from the ground to the consequences, but from the consequences to the ground.^b This hard necessity of proceeding without presuppositions and starting from no other standpoint than that which is common to all has, however, made the presentation of the foundation of ethics so difficult for me already that I now look back on it as being like a difficult feat brought to completion, analogous to when someone has done with a free hand something that is otherwise only performed on a firm platform. But

^d *Unglauben*

^a *Glauben* [also ‘belief’]

^b [See p. 5, note b in ‘Preface to the First Edition’ above]

now, finally, when the question of the metaphysical interpretation of the ethical basis is provoked, the difficulty of the presuppositionless procedure becomes so overwhelming that the only way out I see is to make do with quite general sketches, allusions rather than expositions, to show the path that leads to the destination here, but not to follow it right to the end, and to say really only a very small part of what I would be able to produce under other circumstances. In this procedure I appeal, along with the grounds just presented, to the fact that the task proper has been fulfilled in the preceding chapters, with the consequence that what I achieve here is a work of supererogation,^c an *addition* to be given optionally and taken optionally.

§22 Metaphysical basis

So now we are to forsake the firm ground of experience that has borne all our steps up till now, to seek the final theoretical satisfaction in that to which no experience can even possibly reach, happy if we are allotted a hint, a fleeting glimpse with which we can content ourselves to some extent. On the other hand, what is not to forsake us is the honesty of the procedure up till now: we shall not, in the manner of so-called post-Kantian philosophy, content ourselves with reveries, serve up fairy tales, or seek to impress the reader by means of words or scatter sand in his eyes; instead a little, honestly offered, is our promise.

That which up till now was explanatory ground now itself becomes our problem, namely that natural compassion that is inborn in every human and ineradicable, and has revealed itself to us as the sole source of *non-egoistic actions* – while moral worth attaches to these alone. The way of many modern philosophers, who treat the concepts *good* and *evil* as simple, i.e. as concepts that require and are capable of no explanation, and then for the most part speak very secretly and devoutly of an ‘idea of the good’, out of which they make the support for their ethics, or at least a mantle to cover their deficiency,* makes it necessary for me to interpolate here the explanation that the last thing these concepts are is simple, let alone given *a priori*, and that they are rather expressions of a relation and created

* ‘The concept of *the good*, in its purity, is a *primitive concept*, an *absolute idea*, whose content loses itself in the infinite.’ Bouterweck, *Praktische Aphorismen* [Practical Aphorisms], p. 54. It can be seen that he would most prefer to make the slender, even trivial concept *good* into a Διίπετης [thing fallen from heaven], so as to be able to set it up as an idol in the temple.

^c *opus supererogationis*

from the most everyday experience. Everything that is in accordance with the strivings of any individual will is called, relative to it, *good* – good eating, good roads, good omen; the opposite is called *bad*,^a in living beings *evil*.^b By just the same consideration, a human being who because of his character does not like to be obstructive of the strivings of others but rather favourable and encouraging to the extent that he easily can, who therefore does not injure others, but rather gives them help and support where he can, is called by them a *good human being*. Thus the concept *good* is applied to him, from the same relative, empirical viewpoint located in the passive subject. But if we now investigate the character of such a human being not merely with regard to others, but in itself, we know from the above that it is from a wholly immediate sympathy with the well-being and woe of others, whose source we have recognized as compassion, that the virtues of justice and loving kindness in him come. But if we go back to what is essential in such a character, we find it undeniably in *his making less of a distinction than everyone else between himself and others*. This *distinction* is so great in the eyes of the malicious person, that to him someone else's suffering is immediately a pleasure, which he therefore seeks out without any further advantage of his own, indeed even contrary to it. The same *distinction* is still great enough in the eyes of the egoist that to gain a small advantage to himself he will use great harm to others as a means. So between the *I*, which is restricted to their own person, and the *not-I*, which comprises the rest of the world, there is for both of them a wide chasm, a powerful *distinction*: 'Let the world perish, so long as I am saved!'^a is their maxim. For the good human being, by contrast, this *distinction* is by no means so great, and indeed in actions of noble-mindedness it appears to be removed, in that here someone else's well-being is promoted at the cost of his own, so that someone else's *I* is placed on a par with his own: and where *many* others are to be saved his own *I* is sacrificed entirely for them, with a single one giving up his life for many.

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Now the question arises whether this last construal of the relation between one's own and someone else's *I* that lies at the basis of the actions of the good character is an erroneous one and rests on an illusion, or whether this is instead the case with the opposing construal on which egoism and malice stand. –

This construal that lies at the basis of egoism is, *empirically*, strictly justified. The *distinction* between one's own and someone else's person

^a *schlecht*

^b *böse*

^a *pereat mundus, dum ego salvus sim*

appears to be an absolute one according to experience. The difference in space that separates me from the other, also separates me from his well-being and woe. – On the other hand, we should firstly remark that the cognition that we have of our own self is by no means exhaustive and clear down to the ultimate ground. Through the intuition that the brain carries out upon the data of the senses, and hence mediately, we cognize our own body as an object in space, and through inner sense we cognize the continuing series of our strivings and acts of will which arise on the occasion of external motives, and finally also the manifold weaker or stronger movements of our own will, to which all inner feelings can be reduced. That is all: for the cognizing^b is not itself cognized in turn. On the other hand, the real substratum of this whole appearance, our inner *essence in itself*, the very thing that wills and cognizes,^c is not accessible to us: we see merely towards the outside, inside it is dark. Consequently the acquaintance we have with ourselves is by no means a complete and exhaustive one, but rather very superficial, and for the greater part, the principal part indeed, we are unknown to ourselves and a riddle, or, as
 267 *Kant* says: The I cognizes itself only as appearance, not according to what it may be in itself. As for the other part that falls within our cognition, each one is indeed totally distinct from the other: but it does not follow from that that things are just the same in respect of the great and essential part that remains unknown and concealed in everyone's case. For this part there is at least a further possibility that it is one and identical in all.

On what does all plurality and numerical difference of beings rest? – On space and time: it is possible through these alone, since the many can only be thought and represented either as alongside one another, or as after one another. Thus, because the homogeneous many are *individuals*, I call space and time, in respect of their making *plurality* possible, the *principium individuationis*,^a unconcerned whether this is precisely the sense in which the Scholastics took this expression.

If *anything at all* is indubitably true among the insights that *Kant's* admirable profundity gave to the world, it is the *Transcendental Aesthetic*,^b in other words the doctrine of the ideality of space and time. It is so clearly grounded that it has not been possible to raise so much as an apparent objection against it. It is *Kant's* triumph and is among the extremely few metaphysical doctrines that we can regard as really proven and as genuine

^b *das Erkennen*

^c *das Wollende und Erkennende selbst*

^a [principle of individuation]

^b [The first major division of the *Critique of Pure Reason*]

conquests in the field of metaphysics. According to this doctrine, then, space and time are forms of our own faculty of intuition, belong to it and not to the things cognized through it, and so can never be a determination of things in themselves, but rather pertain only to the *appearance* of them, this being possible solely in our consciousness of the external world bound by physiological conditions. But if *time* and *space* is foreign to the thing in itself, i.e. to the true essence of the world, then necessarily *plurality* is foreign to it also: consequently in the countless appearances of this world of the senses it can really be only one, and only the one and identical essence can manifest itself in all of these. And conversely, that which presents itself as a *many*,^c and hence in time and space, cannot be thing in itself, but only *appearance*. But the latter is, as such, present merely for our consciousness – which is limited by all sorts of conditions and indeed rests on an organic function – and not outside consciousness.

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This doctrine, that all plurality is only apparent, that in all the individuals of this world, however unending the number in which they present themselves after and alongside one another, only one and the same truly existing essence really manifests itself, present and identical in all of them – this doctrine was admittedly there long before Kant, indeed, one would like to say forever. For, first and foremost, it is the chief and fundamental doctrine of the oldest book in the world, the sacred Vedas, whose dogmatic part, or rather esoteric doctrine,⁶³ is available to us in the *Upanishads*.^{*} There we find that great doctrine on practically every page: it is repeated untiringly in countless variants and elucidated by a multiplicity of images and similes. There can be no doubt at all, even from the meagre reports of his philosophy that have reached us, that the wisdom of *Pythagoras* was likewise based on it. That almost the entire philosophy of the *Eleatic*

* The genuineness of the *Oupnek'hat* had been disputed on the grounds of some marginal glosses that were added by Mohammedan scribes and got into the text. But its genuineness is wholly vindicated by the Sanskrit scholar F. H. H. Windischmann (Junior) in his *Sancara, sive de theologumenis Vedanticorum* [*Sancara, or Concerning the Sacred Literature of the Vedas*], 1833, p. XIX, and similarly by Boehinger, *De la vie contemplative chez les Indous* [*On the Contemplative Life of the Hindus*], 1831, p. 12. – Even the reader unfamiliar with Sanskrit can convince himself clearly, by comparing the recent translations of individual Upanishads, by *Rammohun Roy*, *Poley*, even the one by *Colebrooke*, and also the most recent by *Röer*,⁶⁴ that *Anquetil's* strictly literal rendering into Latin of the Persian translation by the martyr of this doctrine, Sultan *Dara Shikoh* [*Darashchakoh*], was based on a precise and complete understanding of the words; and that, by contrast, those others have been helped to a great extent by groping and guessing, so that they are quite certainly much more imprecise. – More detail on this can be found in the second volume of *Parerga*, ch. 16, §184. [Schopenhauer refers to the translation of the *Upanishads* by Anquetil Duperron (1801). See HN 5, 338 for notes on Schopenhauer's treasured copy of this work]

^c *ein Vieles*

269 school was contained in it alone, is known to all. Later the *Neo-Platonists* were permeated by it, in that they taught that ‘because of the unity of all things all souls are one’.^a In the 9th Century we see it crop up unexpectedly in Europe through *Scotus Erigena*, who, inspired by it, is at pains to clothe it in the forms and expressions of Christianity. Among the Mohammedans we find it again as the inspired mysticism of the *Sufis*. But in the Occident *Giordano Bruno* had to atone with an ignominious and agonizing death for the fact that he had not been able to resist the urge to pronounce that truth. Yet we see even the Christian mystics become entangled in it, against their will and intent, whenever and wherever they appear. *Spinoza’s* name is identified with it. Finally, in our day, after *Kant* had destroyed the old dogmatism and the world stood frightened before the smoking ruins, that same knowledge^b was re-awakened by the eclectic philosophy of *Schelling*, who, by amalgamating the doctrines of Plotinus, Spinoza, Kant and Jakob Böhme with the results of the new science of nature, swiftly composed a whole to satisfy the pressing need of his contemporaries in the short term, and then performed it with variations – as a consequence of which that knowledge has attained widespread currency among the learned of Germany, and indeed is almost universally prevalent among those who are merely educated.* The only exception are today’s university philosophers, who have the difficult task of working against *pantheism*; placed by this in great distress and perplexity, in the anguish of their hearts they resort now to the most lamentable sophisms, now to the most bombastic phrases, so as to piece together out of them a decent disguise suit in which to clothe a favoured and specially authorized spinning-wheel-philosophy.^c In short the ‘one and all’^d was in all ages the mockery of fools and the endless

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*On peut assez longtems, chez notre espèce,
Fermer la porte à la raison.
Mais, dès qu’elle entre avec adresse,
Elle reste dans la maison,
Et bientôt elle en est maîtresse.*

[For quite some time, with our species, one can close the door to reason. But once it adroitly enters it stays in the house and soon is mistress there]

Voltaire, letter to Saurin, 10 Nov. 1770.

^a διὰ τὴν ἐνότητα πάντων πάσας ψυχὰς μίαν εἶναι (*propter omnium unitatem cunctas animas unam esse*) [Plotinus, *Enneads*, IV, 9].

^b *Erkenntniß* [elsewhere ‘cognition’]

^c *oktrovirte Rockenphilosophie* [The translation ‘petticoat philosophy’ might seem appropriate here, given the metaphor of a philosophy that needs some showy clothing to cover it. But this would be to confuse *Rocken*, ‘distaff’ or ‘spinning wheel’, with *Rock*, ‘petticoat’. See note c on p. 19 above]

^d Ἐν καὶ πᾶν

meditation of the wise. However, the rigorous proof of it can be performed only from Kant's doctrine, as occurred above – though Kant himself did not do this, but rather, after the manner of clever speakers, gave only the premisses, leaving the joy of the conclusion to the listeners.

If, accordingly, plurality and difference belongs solely to mere *appearance*, and if it is one and the same essence that presents itself in everything that lives, then the construal that removes the distinction between I and not-I is not the erroneous one: rather the one opposed to it must be. We find the latter also referred to by the Hindus with the name *māyā*, i.e. appearance, illusion, phantasm.^a We have found the first view to be at the basis of the phenomenon of compassion, and indeed found the latter to be its real expression. It would therefore be the metaphysical basis of ethics, and would consist in *one* individual's immediately recognizing himself, his own true essence, in the *other*. Thus as a result practical wisdom, doing right and doing good, would coincide exactly with the most profound doctrine of the most far-reaching theoretical wisdom; and the practical philosopher, i.e. the just, the beneficent, the noble-minded one, would express through his deed simply the same knowledge that is the outcome of the theoretical philosopher's greatest profundity and most painstaking study. Meanwhile moral excellence stands higher than all theoretical wisdom, which is always merely patchwork and arrives on the slow path of inferences at the same goal as the former reaches in one stride; and someone who is morally noble, however much he may lack in intellectual excellence, displays through his actions the deepest knowledge, the highest wisdom, and shames the greatest genius or scholar if the latter betrays through his deeds that that great truth has really remained foreign to him in his heart.

'Individuation is real, the *principium individuationis* and the distinctness of individuals that rests upon it is the order of things in themselves. Every individual is a being^b fundamentally distinct from all others. I have my true being^c in my own self alone, and everything else, on the contrary, is not-I and foreign to me.' – This is the knowledge to whose truth flesh and bone bear witness, that lies at the ground of egoism, and whose real expression is every unkind, unjust or malicious action. –

'Individuation is mere appearance, arising by way of space and time, which are nothing more than the forms of all objects of my cerebral cognitive faculty and are conditioned by it; so the plurality and distinctness

^a *Schein, Täuschung, Gaukelbild*

^b *Wesen*

^c *Seyn*

of individuals is also mere appearance, i.e. is present only in my *representation*. My true, inner essence exists in every living thing as immediately as it reveals itself in my self-consciousness to myself alone.’ – It is this knowledge, for which the standing expression in Sanskrit is the formula *tat-twam asi*, i.e. ‘You are that’,^a that erupts as *compassion*, upon which, therefore, rests all genuine, i.e. all disinterested virtue, and whose real expression is every good deed. It is this knowledge, ultimately, that every appeal to leniency, to loving kindness, to mercy in place of right, conforms with: for such an appeal is a reminder of the respect in which we are all one and the same being.^b On the other hand, egoism, envy, hatred, persecution, harshness, revenge, schadenfreude, cruelty calls upon that first knowledge and contents itself with that. The emotion and joy that we feel on hearing of, even more at the sight of, and most of all at our own completion of a noble action rests most profoundly on its giving us the certainty that, beyond all plurality and distinctness of the individuals that the *principium individuationis* holds before us, there lies a unity among them that is truly available, indeed accessible to us, since it did after all come about factually.

According to whether the one mode of knowledge or the other is adhered to, the Love or Strife^c of Empedocles comes about between being and being. But if anyone, when infused with hatred, invaded his most detested adversary in hostile fashion, and reached into his deepest interior, he would, to his surprise, find himself in there. For as much as we are lurking in all the persons that appear to us in a dream, it is just as much the case with
 272 being awake – even if not so easy to gain insight into. But *tat-twam asi*.⁶⁵

The predominance of one or the other of these two modes of knowledge shows itself not only in particular actions, but in the overall type of consciousness or mood, which in the *good* character is so essentially different from that in the *bad*. The latter senses everywhere a strong dividing wall between himself and everything outside him. The world for him is an *absolute not-I* and his relationship to it a primordially^d foreign one: and because of that the fundamental tone of his mood becomes spitefulness, suspicion, envy, schadenfreude. – By contrast, the good character lives in an external world homogeneous with his essence: others for him are not not-I, but are ‘I once more’. Thus his primordial relationship to everyone is one of friendship: he feels himself akin to all beings inside, immediately

^a [From the *Chandogya Upanishad*, 6, 8, 7]

^b *Wesen* [being or essence]

^c *die φίλια oder der νεῖκος* [see Empedocles, fragment B 17 (Diels-Kranz)]

^d *ursprünglich*

participates with sympathy^c in their well-being and woe, and presupposes with confidence the same participation on their part. Out of this grows the profound peace inside him and the reassuring, calm, satisfied mood that makes everyone feel good in his presence. – The evil character in distress does not count on the assistance of others; if he calls upon it, this happens without confidence; if he gains it, he receives it without true gratitude, because he can scarcely conceive it otherwise than as the effect of others' foolishness. For he is still incapable of recognizing his own essence again in someone else's, even when it has made itself known through unambiguous signs from that source. It is on this that the outrageous nature of all ingratitude properly rests. This moral isolation in which he essentially and inescapably finds himself also leads him easily into despair. – The good character will call on the assistance of others with a confidence just as great as the preparedness to give assistance to them that he is conscious of in himself. For, as has been said, for the one the human world is not-I, for the other 'I once more'. – The magnanimous man who forgives his enemy and repays evil with good is elevated^a and gains the highest praise – because he has recognized his own intrinsic essence even in the place where it decisively negated itself.

Every wholly pure good deed, every fully and truly disinterested help that has, as such, the distress of others exclusively as its motive, is really a mysterious action, a practical mysticism, if we investigate it down to the ultimate ground, in so far as it springs in the end from the same knowledge that makes up the essence of all true mysticism and is truly explicable in no other manner. For the fact that one person so much as gives alms without remotely aiming at anything but that the want that oppresses the other should be lessened is possible only to the extent that he realizes it is he himself that now appears to him in that sad guise, and so recognizes his own essence in itself in someone else's appearance. Hence in the previous chapter I called compassion the great mystery of ethics.

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Someone who goes to his death for his fatherland has become free of the illusion that restricts existence to his own person: he stretches his own essence out over his fellow countrymen in whom he lives on, and indeed over their coming generations on whose behalf he operates – and thus he regards death as like the blinking of the eyes that does not interrupt seeing.⁶⁶

^c *nimmt unmittelbar Theil*

^a *erhaben*

The one for whom all others were always not-I, and who at bottom even held his own person alone to be truly real, and really looked upon the others by contrast merely as phantoms to whom he attributed only a relative existence in so far as they could be means to his ends or could oppose them, so that there remained an immeasurable distinction, a deep chasm between his person and all of that not-I, and who thus existed exclusively in this his own person – in death he sees all reality and the whole world perish along with his self. On the other hand, the one who glimpsed his own essence, himself, in all others, and indeed in all that has life, whose existence therefore flowed together with the existence of everything living, loses at death only a small part of his existence: he endures in all others, in whom he has indeed always recognized and loved his essence and his self, and the illusion that divided his consciousness from that of the rest vanishes.⁶⁷ The difference between the way in which especially good and predominantly evil human beings confront the hour of death may rest on this, not entirely, but at least in great part. –

In all centuries the poor truth has had to blush at the fact that it is paradoxical: and yet it is not truth's fault. It cannot assume the guise of the universal error that occupies the throne. So it looks up with a sigh towards its protecting god, time, who signals victory and glory to it, but whose wing-beats are so great and slow that the individual dies off in the meantime. So I too have been highly conscious of the paradoxical nature that this metaphysical interpretation of the fundamental ethical phenomenon must have for those occidental educated people who are used to quite other groundings of ethics, but I cannot do violence to the truth. Instead all that I am able to do, considering this, is to show by using a quotation how thousands of years ago that metaphysics of ethics was already the fundamental view of Indian wisdom, which I refer back to as Copernicus did to the world system of the Pythagoreans that had been ousted by Aristotle and Ptolemy. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, *Lectio* 13; 27, 28 we find, according to the translation of A. W. von Schlegel: 'He who sees that the highest lord is the same in all living things and does not perish among those that perish – he sees the truth. – And he who sees the same lord present everywhere will not harm himself by his own fault: then he makes his way to the highest path.'^a

I must let these hints towards the metaphysics of ethics suffice, although it still remains to take one more significant step here. Only that presupposes

^a *eundem in omnibus animantibus consistentem summum dominum, istis pereuntibus haud pereuntem qui cernit, is vere cernit. – Eundem vero cernens ubique praesentem dominum, non violat semet ipsum sua ipsius culpa: exinde pergit ad summum iter.*

that we had also gone one step further in *ethics* itself, something I was not permitted to do because in Europe its highest goal is fixed for ethics in the doctrine of right and the doctrine of virtue, and people are not acquainted with what goes beyond this, or at any rate do not grant it validity. So we can put down to this necessary omission the fact that the sketches of the metaphysics of ethics that have been propounded do not as yet allow us to anticipate, even from a distance, the keystone of the complete edifice of metaphysics, or the real coherence of the Divine Comedy.^b But this also fell neither within the task nor within my plan. For one cannot say everything in one day, nor ought one to answer more than one is asked.

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In seeking to advance human knowledge and insight one will always feel the resistance of the age, like that of a burden one has to pull and that presses heavily on the ground, defying all efforts. Then one must comfort oneself with the certainty that despite having prejudices against one, one has the truth on one's side, which once its confederate, time, has united with it, is completely certain of victory, if not today, then tomorrow.

^b *Divina Commedia*

Judgment

OF THE ROYAL DANISH SOCIETY OF SCIENCES

To the question set in the year 1837, 'Is the source and basis of moral philosophy to be sought in an idea of morality that resides immediately in consciousness (or conscience) and in an analysis of the remaining basic moral concepts that arise out of it, or in another cognitive ground?' only one writer attempted a response, whose essay, written in German and prefaced by the words: 'Preaching morals is easy, grounding morals is* hard' we were unable to judge worthy of the prize. For, omitting what was principally required, he thought that the task was to set up some principle of ethics, so that he placed the part of his essay where he expounded the connection between the ethical principle proposed by him and his metaphysics in an appendix, in which he offered more than had been required, while the theme itself demanded the kind of investigation in which the connection between metaphysics and ethics would have been considered first and foremost. But when the writer attempted to show that the basis of ethics consists in compassion, he neither satisfied us with the form of his essay, nor in fact proved that this basis is sufficient; rather he was forced to admit the opposite himself. Nor should it go unmentioned that several distinguished philosophers of recent times are mentioned in such an indecent fashion as to provoke just and grave offence.^a

* The Academy added this second 'is' [*ist*] to provide a proof of Longinus' doctrine (*de sublim.* [*On the Sublime*], ch. 39), that by adding or removing *one* syllable one can destroy the whole energy of an aphorism [*Sentenz*].⁶⁸

^a*Judicium**Regiae Danicae Scientiarum Societatis*

Quaestionem anno 1837 propositam, 'utrum philosophiae moralis fons et fundamentum in idea moralitatis, quae immediate conscientia contineatur, et ceteris notionibus fundamentalibus, quae ex illa prodeant, explicandis quaerenda sint, an in alio cognoscendi principio', unus tantum scriptor explicare conatus est, cujus commentationem, germanico sermone compositam et his verbis notatam: Moral predigen ist leicht, Moral begründen ist schwer, praemio dignam judicare nequivimus. Omisso enim eo, quod potissimum postulabatur, hoc expeti putavit, ut principium aliquod ethicae conderetur, itaque eam partem commentationis suae, in qua principii ethicae a se propositi et metaphysicae suae nexum exponit, appendicis loco habuit, in qua plus quam postulatam esset praestaret, quum tamen ipsum thema ejusmodi disputationem flagitaret, in qua vel praecipuo loco metaphysicae et ethicae nexus consideraretur. Quod autem scriptor in sympathia fundamentum ethicae constituere conatus est, neque ipsa disserendi forma nobis satisfacit, neque reapse, hoc fundamentum sufficere, evicit; quin ipse contra esse confiteri coactus est. Neque reticendum videtur, plures recentioris aetatis summos philosophos tam indecenter commemorari, ut justam et gravem offensionem habeat.

Variants in different editions

Two editions containing both the *Prize Essay on the Freedom of the Will* and *On the Basis of Morals* were published during Schopenhauer's lifetime:

- A 1841: first edition of *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics* (*Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik, behandelt in zwei akademischen Preisschriften von Dr. Arthur Schopenhauer, Mitglied der Königl. Norwegischen Societät der Wissenschaften*. Frankfurt am Main)
- B 1860: second edition of *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics* (*Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik, behandelt in zwei akademischen Preisschriften von Dr. Arthur Schopenhauer, Mitglieder der Königl. Norwegischen Societät der Wissenschaften. Zweite verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage*. Leipzig)

The *Prize Essay on Freedom* was published alone in an earlier edition:

- N 1840: Norwegian edition of *Prize Essay on Freedom of the Will* (*Kan Menneskets frie Villie bevises af dets Selvbevidsthed? En med det Kongelige Norske Videnskabers-Selskabs større Guldmedaille belønnet Priis-Afhandling af Dr. Arthur Schopenhauer.*)

The text translated in this volume is that edited by Arthur Hübscher, *Arthur Schopenhauer Sämtliche Werke* (Mannheim: Brockhaus, 1988), vol. 4, which essentially follows B. Schopenhauer made many additions in B, listed below, which often take the form of new examples or amplifications of the argument of A.

N was published on the basis of the manuscript Schopenhauer had submitted for the Norwegian competition, but he had no opportunity to oversee its publication, was not sent back his original manuscript, and did not know of the publication of this edition prior to the publication of A. A small number of passages that occur solely in N are noted here.

As a rule no mention is made here of the following changes between editions: passages where Schopenhauer explicitly refers to differences between

A and B, or where he refers to works of his published after A; references to the Rosenkranz edition of Kant's works, Latin translations of quoted Greek passages, footnotes adding German translations of passages in English, Italian etc., all of which tend to be additions in B; and more or less minor revisions to the wording of the German text.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

- 1 In footnote: the reference to *Agudeza y arte* is added in B. In A: 'I am not acquainted with the myth' instead of 'However ... depicted in this way'.
- 2 In footnote: '*vulgo* ... Litteratur' added in B.
- 3 Footnote 'He sang ... p. 376' added in B.
- 4 Footnote 'However ... in January' added in B.

PRIZE ESSAY ON THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL

- 1 After 'treated briefly' in N: 'while this explanation here would only interrupt the train of thought unnecessarily and distract the reader'.
- 2 After 'freedom' in N: 'which is that of physical freedom'.
- 3 After 'a logical one' in N: '(ground of cognition [*Erkenntnisgrund*])'.
- 4 'or rather postulate' added in B.
- 5 'for self-consciousness is immediate' added in B.
- 6 In footnote in N: 'and then in almost all later thinkers' instead of 'and fully elaborated in Locke'.
- 7 Footnote 'It is noteworthy ... *quae nolumus?*' added in B.
- 8 Sentence 'For he says ... Erdmann, p. 669)' added in B.
- 9 After 'reason' in N: 'if need be with the addition of experience'.
- 10 Sentence 'Self-consciousness proclaims ... being asked after' added in B.
- 11 'only in its case ... intrinsic state of freedom' added in B.
- 12 After 'I of his I' in N: 'so that it loses all sense'.
- 13 In N: 'from consciousness of one's own self to consciousness of other things, that is to the cognitive faculty' instead of 'to the cognitive faculty'.
- 14 'in accordance with Newton's second law' added in B.
- 15 'in many cases the whole nature of the effect ... is exhausted.' and 'Thus, e.g.,' added in N.
- 16 After 'in many cases' in N: 'but all this by no means removes the exact equality between cause and effect, which is essential to this kind of causality'.
- 17 'the secret ... called forth by it' added in B.
- 18 Footnote 'It is evident ... incognito' added in B.
- 19 'and more recently has sprung up in Germany too' added in B.
- 20 In A: 'centuries' instead of 'millennia'.
- 21 After 'from outside;' in N: 'here, however, self-consciousness comes to the assistance of consciousness of other things'.
- 22 In A: 'precisely enough' instead of 'as precisely as ... in that case'.

- 23 Whole paragraph 'I can do what I will . . . pleasing to a high ministry' added in B.
- 24 Sentence 'And to expect . . . without a rope to pull it' added in B.
- 25 Sentence 'Under presupposition . . . an effect without cause' added in B.
- 26 In A: 'are traced back to galvanism and the latter to an original force called electricity' instead of 'are traced back . . . electricity'.
- 27 Sentence 'It is through this, first of all . . . is determined' and 'For' added in B.
- 28 Sentence 'We treat a human being . . . and what is not' added in B.
- 29 Four sentences 'According to Herodotus' tale . . . the opposite' added in B.
- 30 Sentence 'Beneath the changeable mantle . . . always the same' added in B.
- 31 Sentence 'Hence the saying . . . lifelong thief' added in B.
- 32 Whole paragraph 'We find the conviction . . . committing of a crime' added in B.
- 33 'So, captured as correctly as it is poetically . . . life developed' added in B.
- 34 In A: 'Rather, every *existentia* absolutely presupposes an *essentia*' instead of the sentence 'Rather, as an *essentia* . . . without *essentia*' and 'For'.
- 35 Footnote 'Leibniz's instability . . . *Theodicy*, §45–53' added in B.
- 36 Sentence '*Quidquid fit necessario fit* [Whatever happens, necessarily happens]' added in B.
- 37 In A: '*Doppelt-gesicht* (double-sight)' instead of '*zweiten Gesicht* (second sight)'.
- 38 Three whole paragraphs 'I shall add . . . before we read it' added in B.
- 39 In A: 'I name Luther' instead of 'I recall that Jeremiah . . . But I appeal in particular to Luther'.
- 40 'instead of penetrating . . . even with words' added in B.
- 41 After 'same position as Aristotle.' in N: 'In *Metaphysics* VIII, 5 Aristotle's own train of thought leads him very close to the insight into the necessity of acts of will; only, in line with his idiosyncrasy, even here he does not penetrate any further into the depths, but as usual glides along on the surface, and does not achieve that insight even on this occasion.'
- 42 Two whole paragraphs 'Cicero already . . . second book' added in B.
- 43 Three sentences 'Almost 200 years later . . . ventilation of the issue' added in B.
- 44 In A: 'two' instead of 'three'.
- 45 Whole paragraph 'At the beginning of the 17th century . . . things regress greatly' added in B.
- 46 'in the narrower sense' added in B.
- 47 'let alone Vanini' added in B.
- 48 Two whole paragraphs 'For if a bad action . . . for hearth and altar' added in B.
- 49 In N: 'the immortal Voltaire' instead of 'Voltaire'.
- 50 '(e.g. *Prolegomena* . . . Rosenkranz)' added in B.
- 51 Sentence 'Incidentally . . . without disclosing his source' added in B.
- 52 In A: 'through Hegel' instead of 'in the minister-creature Hegel'.
- 53 'of the State's purposes' added in B.

- 54 After 'do the same' in N: 'principally in consequence of the lack of culture [*Rohheit*] brought about by Hegelian stupefaction-philosophy'.
- 55 Four sentences 'They explain freedom ... regressed the German thinking mind into' added in B.
- 56 Sentence 'However, in some of them ... on the quiet' added in B.
- 57 Sentence 'With that they think they are something' added in B.
- 58 Six sentences 'There are even a few ... related to ἀνέμος' added in B.
- 59 'Thus things stand ... have taught about it' added in B.
- 60 'In *Twelfth Night* ... and be this so' added in B.
- 61 After 'thought!' in N: 'Compare this passage with that cited above from Priestley (marked as p. 90).'
- 62 Two whole paragraphs 'A corroboration ... *within our power*' added in B.
- 63 After 'speculative ones.' in N: 'But since every monograph is something arbitrarily separated from the whole of its science and resembles the anatomical depiction of a single part, whose connection with the whole one feels called upon to think out in addition, and would like to see at least the basic strokes towards it suggested, I wish to give guidance, by way of some general suggestions, towards the discovery of the point of unification of the isolated truth I have established with ethics and metaphysics.'
- 64 Two sentences 'So Aristotle says ... man who would do it – *Rhetoric* I, 9' and 'Thus' added in B.
- 65 Four whole paragraphs 'If in consequence ... might be possible' added in A.
- 66 'i.e. his will as thing in itself' added in A.
- 67 'and a criminal code ... to criminal actions' added in B.
- 68 Two whole paragraphs 'In general then all those crimes ... towards him with open arms' added in B.

PRIZE ESSAY ON THE BASIS OF MORALS

- 1 Sentence 'Thus Plato says ... p. 371, Bip.' added in B.
- 2 Footnote '*Io dir non vi ... Casti*' added in B.
- 3 Footnote 'Its source is myself ... incognito' added in B.
- 4 Sentence 'It is simply impossible ... without moral worth' added in B.
- 5 In A: 'sodomy, pederasty and onanism' instead of 'onanism, pederasty and bestiality'.
- 6 Five sentences 'Of these, firstly onanism ... corrupted by it' added in B. In A this passage reads: 'However, these offences are quite *sui generis* [in a kind of their own] and make up a wholly separate class by themselves. They do belong in ethics in so far as they issue from the human will. But they are so fundamentally different from the entire remaining theme of ethics, which treats of the relationships between human beings and hence of virtue and vice, traceable back in an unforced manner to the concepts of justice and loving kindness together with their opposite – that I hold it to be impossible to propound a foundation and principle of ethics from which both its proper objects just named and the grounds against those sins of lust could be derived

in an unforced way. For only considering things from a very general point of view, gathering them together under the concept “human doings as such”, can bring together the two objects that are otherwise so heterogeneous. Bringing even pederasty under the concept of injustice towards another is prevented by the principle *volenti non fit injuria* [no injury is done to him who wills it]. So in my grounding of ethics to be propounded in the following Part I have left the unnatural sexual offences entirely out of account, and can convey what I have to say about them here and now in a few words. These vices of unnatural lust are really offences *against the species as such, against the species through which and in which we have our being* [*Daseyn*]: they directly infringe and frustrate this species’ ways and means of preservation that are so important and so highly concerned with its nature. Conscience will also feel itself weighed down in quite a different fashion in consequence of them than it does in consequence of other moral offences, that is unjust or wicked actions: the latter will have anxiety more as their consequence, while the former have more shame and feeling of degradation.’

- 7 ‘which is what the philosophasters . . . make it out to be’ added in B.
- 8 Footnote ‘Hugo Grotius . . . Emperor Severus’ added in B.
- 9 ‘and sometimes one . . . learn nothing’ and ‘and even’ added in B.
- 10 Sentence ‘But instead . . . the other here’ added in B.
- 11 Sentence ‘The chorus . . . nothing at all’ added in B.
- 12 ‘(whose philosophy . . . his teacher)’ added in B.
- 13 Footnote ‘*Intellectio pura* . . . *Meditations*, p. 188’ added in B.
- 14 Whole paragraph ‘Incidentally, the entire view . . . with its imperatives’ added in B.
- 15 ‘(i.e. non-Judaicized)’ added in B.
- 16 ‘that deserves to be developed more closely here’ added in B.
- 17 The heading ‘*Note*’ and following text to ‘. . . from their constitution’ added in B.
- 18 ‘as another of that kind’ added in B.
- 19 ‘although their respective opinions . . . to do with philosophy’ added in B.
- 20 ‘most of all among business people . . . a quite special honour’ added in B.
- 21 ‘– and one whom . . . lifelong thief’ added in B.
- 22 Two sentences ‘You have to read crime stories . . . strong muzzle’ added in B.
- 23 ‘i.e. that muzzle being thrown off’ added in B.
- 24 After first sentence of the footnote, the remainder ‘But the use of . . . Germanomania’ added in B.
- 25 ‘All for me . . . favourite saying’ added in B.
- 26 Seven sentences ‘For in consequence of the subjectivity . . . wins applause’ added in B.
- 27 ‘and Herodotus . . . from the beginning’ added in B.
- 28 ‘but thus it is, as Petrarch complains’, three lines of verse, and sentence ‘More extensive . . . §114’ added in B.
- 29 After ‘carried out in §5’, this additional passage in A: ‘and proof of the crimes that occur *against the species as such* as wholly *sui generis* [of their own kind]’.

- 30 Sentence 'On the contrary ... synonym of compassion' added in B.
- 31 'or from corrupting ... into pederasty' added in B.
- 32 In A: 'But this Eldorado is now further away than ever' instead of the three sentences 'But this is the path ... than their leaders.'
- 33 Footnote 'The doctrine of right ... §62' added in B.
- 34 'someone from whom advice is sought ... abomination of the world' and sentence 'In accordance with this ... *Inferno*, XI, 61–66)' added in B.
- 35 'because the one to whom ... one assumed it' added in B.
- 36 Two sentences 'Let it also be remarked ... holds to justice' added in B.
- 37 Two sentences 'Ask me no questions ... to ask questions' added in B.
- 38 'In line with this ... if it brings about great good' added in B.
- 39 'even already in Pythagoras ... ch. 33' added in B.
- 40 'And so what *Calderon* ... p. 229' added in B.
- 41 'and moreover that even in 1860 ... kept slaves' added in B.
- 42 Two sentences 'We find this insight expressed ... letter 229)' added in B.
- 43 'thus Aristotle already says ... XXXIX, 2' added in B.
- 44 Sentence 'Even the fact that ... arousing compassion' added in B.
- 45 Sentence and quoted verse '*Boileau* already mocks ... four faculties?' added in B.
- 46 Two sentences 'We do not encounter ... degrade animals to things' added in B.
- 47 'of a kind not found in the human race' added in B.
- 48 'anyone must ... not to recognize that' added in B.
- 49 'judaicized' added in B.
- 50 Sentence 'A similar, characteristic contrast ... Apuleius, *On Magic*, p. 36)' added in B.
- 51 Four sentences 'For precisely this loop-hole ... *Parerga*, §177' added in B.
- 52 'and that the villain ... belong to him' added in B.
- 53 In footnote: five sentences 'But we find an even more strict example ... think of her as a woman' added in B.
- 54 In A: 'For nothing is achieved through broad talk of "moments" and "getting things moving"' instead of 'though I pay ... whole of Germany'.
- 55 'which should, however, be alleviated ... chloroform' and sentence 'On the other hand ... to survive in the North' added in B.
- 56 Five sentences 'The altar ... magnanimity' added in B. [The Greek quotation οὐτε ἐξ ἱεροῦ etc. is present in A. The addition in B begins with the Latin '(nec aram etc.)']
- 57 'which Stobaeus ... *Anthology*, I, §77' added in B.
- 58 Four sentences 'So in the same sense ... in accordance with the tree' added in B.
- 59 'and which has thereby ... through preaching' added in B.
- 60 Sentence 'It can indeed come about ... in the preceding essay, pp. 50ff.' added in B.
- 61 Four sentences 'The testimonies of the ancients ... deeds had been just' added in B.

- 62 Four sentences 'A different kind of evidence . . . in English newspapers' added in B.
- 63 'or rather esoteric doctrine' added in B.
- 64 In footnote 'and also the most recent by *Röer*' added in B.
- 65 Two sentences 'For as much as we are . . . But *tat-twam asi*' added in B.
- 66 Whole paragraph 'Someone who goes to his death . . . not interrupt seeing' added in B.
- 67 'and the illusion that divided . . . of the rest vanishes' added in B.
- 68 In A: '(sic)' instead of the footnote 'The Academy . . . aphorism'.

Glossary of names

- ABRAHAM Hebrew patriarch from the Old Testament
AGUILAR (Aguilera) Spaniard executed for murder (1845)
ALBA, FERNANDO ALVAREZ, DUKE OF (1508–82) Spanish statesman and general
ALCIATUS, ANDREAS (Alciati, Andrea) (1492–1550) Italian humanist
D’ALEMBERT, JEAN LE ROND (1717–83) French philosopher and mathematician
AMERIGO *see* Vespucci
ANQUETIL-DUPERRON, ABRAHAM HYACINTHE (1731–1805) Orientalist, translator and editor of *Oupnek’hat*, a translation of the *Upanishads* into Latin (from Persian), a book which Schopenhauer acquired in 1813, and later referred to as the ‘consolation of his life’
APOLLO Greek god of arts and sciences
APULEIUS, LUCIUS (2nd cent. AD) Roman writer
ARCHIMEDES (287–212 BC) Mathematician and physicist from Syracuse, Sicily
ARCHYTAS (4th cent. BC) Pythagorean philosopher and mathematician
ARIOSTO, LUDOVICO (1474–1533) Italian poet
ARISTOTLE (384–322 BC) The great and immensely influential Greek philosopher
ARRIA, CAECINA Wife of Paetus, committed suicide AD 42
AUGUSTINE, SAINT (353–430) Church Father, Bishop of Hippo
BAYLE, PIERRE (1647–1706) French writer of the Enlightenment, author of *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (*Historical and Critical Dictionary*)
BENTLEY, RICHARD (1662–1742) English classical scholar, influential textual critic
BLOCK, GEORG WILHELM Author of *Neue Grundlegung zur Philosophie der Sitten* (*New Groundwork to the Philosophy of Morals*) (1802)
BOCHINGER, JEAN JACQUES Author of *La vie contemplative, ascétique et monastique chez les Indous et les peuples Bouddhistes* (*Contemplative, ascetic and monastic life among the Indians and the Buddhist peoples*) (1831)
BÖHME, JACOB (1575–1624) Lutheran mystic born in Silesia
BOILEAU-DESPRÉAUX, NICOLAS (1636–1711) French poet and critic
BOUTERWECK, FRIEDRICH (1766–1828) German aesthetician, Professor of Philosophy at Göttingen
BRUNO, GIORDANO (1548–1600) Italian philosopher of nature, burned to death as a heretic

- BUDDHA (Siddārtha Gautama) (6th–5th cent. BC) Historical founder of the Buddhist religion
- BÜRGER, GOTTFRIED AUGUST (1747–94) German jurist and poet
- BURIDAN, JOHN (c. 1300–after 1358) French scholastic philosopher
- BUXTON, THOMAS FOWELL (1786–1845) Author of *The African Slave-trade* (1839)
- CADMUS In Greek legend, founder of the city of Thebes
- CALDERON DE LA BARCA, DON PEDRO (1600–81) Spanish dramatist
- CALIGULA (Gaius Julius) (AD 12–41) Autocratic Roman emperor
- CAMPANELLA, TOMMASO (1568–1639) Italian Dominican, philosopher and poet
- CASSINA, UBALDO Italian author of *Saggio analitico sulla compassione* (*Analytical essay on compassion*) (1788)
- CASTI, GIAMBATTISTA (1724–1803) Italian novelist, satyrist and poet
- CATO UTICENSIS, MARCUS PORCIUS (95–47 BC) Roman statesman, opponent of Julius Caesar, committed suicide
- CHAMFORT, NICOLAS (1741–94) French aphorist
- CHRYSIPPUS (c. 280 – c. 206 BC) Greek philosopher, head of the early Stoic school in Athens
- CICERO, MARCUS TULLIUS (106–43 BC) Pre-eminent Roman statesman and orator, who composed the first substantial body of philosophical work in Latin
- CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (150–215) Christian Platonist philosopher
- CLEOBULUS (6th cent. BC) Philosopher, one of the Seven Sages of Greece
- CLEOPATRA VII (69–30 BC) Ruler of Egypt, involved with Julius Caesar and Marcus Antonius, committed suicide
- COLEBROOKE, HENRY THOMAS (1765–1837) English Indologist, translator of the *Upanishads*
- COLUMBUS, CHRISTOPHER (Cristóbal Colón) (1451–1506) Genoese-born explorer who made discoveries in the Americas
- CONDILLAC, ETIENNE BONNOT DE (1715–80) French philosopher of the Enlightenment period
- COPERNICUS, NICOLAUS (1473–1543) Polish astronomer whose theories revolutionized the study of the solar system
- COUSIN, VICTOR (1792–1867) French philosopher and historian of philosophy
- CURTIUS RUFUS, QUINTUS (c. AD 50) Roman historian
- CYNICS Philosophical movement in Greece from mid-4th century BC
- DANTE ALIGHIERI (1265–1321) Italian poet, author of the great trilogy *La Divina Commedia* (*The Divine Comedy*)
- DARA SHIKOH (1615–59) Mughal emperor, translator of the *Upanishads*
- DESCARTES, RENÉ (1596–1650) French philosopher, often referred to as the father of modern philosophy, his rationalism and mind–body dualism being especially influential
- DIDEROT, DENIS (1713–84) French philosopher, critic, mathematician and poet of the Enlightenment
- DIODORUS CRONUS (fl. c. 300 BC) Greek philosopher of the Megarian school

- DIOGENES LAERTIUS (c. 300–350) Athenian historian of ancient philosophy, whose work *Lives of the Philosophers* is a rich source of knowledge about earlier thinkers
- DOMITIAN (Titus Flavius Domitianus) (51–96) Roman emperor famed for ruthlessness
- DON JUAN Legendary Spanish seducer of women, the central character of Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* and various literary works including Byron's *Don Juan*
- ECCLESIASTES Book of the Old Testament traditionally attributed to Solomon
- ELEATIC SCHOOL Greek school of philosophers, followers of Parmenides of Elea (early-to-mid-5th cent. BC), who argued against plurality and motion
- EMPEDOCLES (c. 495 – c. 435 BC) Greek philosopher, important for his cosmology
- ENCELADUS A giant in Greek legend
- EPICHRMUS (550–460 BC) Greek writer of comedies in Sicilian Doric dialect
- EPICURUS (341–270 BC) Greek philosopher, founder of the important school of Epicureanism
- ERDMANN, JOHANN EDUARD (1805–92) German philosopher, historian of philosophy, editor of Leibniz's works
- ERIGENA, JOHANNES SCOTUS (c. 800 – c. 877) Christian Neoplatonist philosopher
- FEUERBACH, LUDWIG ANDREAS (1804–72) German philosopher, member of the movement of Young Hegelians
- FICHTE, JOHANN GOTTLIEB (1762–1814) German philosopher, one of the chief figures in German Idealism in the period immediately after Kant, author of the *Wissenschaftslehre* (*Science of Knowledge*) and *System der Sittenlehre* (*System of Moral Philosophy*). Schopenhauer attended Fichte's lectures in 1811–13, but is consistently merciless in decrying him as an inferior and pompous thinker
- FORSTER, THOMAS (1789–1850) English natural scientist, author of *Philozoa*, *moral reflections on the actual condition of animals and the means of improving the same* (1839)
- FRAUENSTÄDT, JULIUS (1813–79) Schopenhauer's associate and editor of the first complete edition of his works in 1873
- FREDERICK THE GREAT (Friedrich II) (1712–86) King of Prussia
- GARVE, CHRISTIAN (1742–98) Professor of Philosophy in Leipzig, author of *Uebersicht der vornehmsten Principien der Sittenlehre* (*Survey of the Leading Principles in Moral Theory*) (1798)
- GELON (c. 540–478 BC) Tyrant of Syracuse and Gela
- GOETHE, JOHANN WOLFGANG VON (1749–1832) Poet, dramatist and scholar in many fields, Germany's greatest writer and prominent Enlightenment figure. Schopenhauer knew Goethe in the period 1813–14 and collaborated with him over his theory of colours
- GRACIÁN, BALTHASAR (1601–58) Spanish philosophical writer, intensively studied and translated into German by Schopenhauer

- GROTIUS, HUGO (1583–1645) Dutch scholar, lawyer and statesman, author of *De iure belli ac pacis* (*The law of war and peace*) (1625)
- GUEBRES Followers of the Zoroastrian religion
- HADRIAN (Publius Aelius Hadrianus) (76–138) Roman emperor
- HAMLET The character in Shakespeare's play of the same name
- HARTLEY, DAVID (1705–57) English philosopher
- HEGEL, GEORG WILHELM FRIEDRICH (1770–1831) German philosopher, leading figure in the movement of German Idealism, author of *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (*Phenomenology of Spirit*) and *Enzyklopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften* (*Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*), Professor of Philosophy in Berlin and dominant intellectual figure in the first four decades of the nineteenth century. Consistently criticized and satirized by Schopenhauer as a charlatan
- HELVÉTIUS, CLAUDE ADRIEN (1715–71) Philosopher of the French Enlightenment
- HERCULES Legendary Greek hero of great strength and prowess
- HERODOTUS (c. 484–426 BC) Greek historian
- HESIOD (8th cent. BC) One of the earliest known Greek poets
- HEYNE, CHRISTIAN GOTTLÖB (1729–1812) German classical scholar
- HOBBS, THOMAS (1588–1679) English philosopher
- D'HOLBACH, PAUL HEINRICH DIETRICH (1723–89) French philosopher
- HOMER (fl. c. 700 BC) The early ancient Greek poet, author of the epic poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*
- HORACE (Quintus Horatius Flaccus) (65–8 BC) Roman poet, frequently quoted by Schopenhauer
- HUITZILOPOCHTLI Aztec god of sun and war
- HUME, DAVID (1711–76) Scottish philosopher, essayist and historian, often considered the greatest philosopher to write in English
- HUTCHESON, FRANCIS (1694–1747) Philosopher, often taken as founder of the Scottish Enlightenment
- IAMBlichus (c. 242–327) Greek philosopher, a founder of Neoplatonism
- JACOB Hebrew patriarch in the Old Testament
- JACOBI, FRIEDRICH HEINRICH (1743–1819) German polemicist, critic of Enlightenment and idealism
- JEREMIAH Prophet in the Old Testament
- JOHN THE BAPTIST Jewish preacher and prophet, contemporary of Jesus
- JUVENAL (Decimus Junius Juvenalis) (c. 58–138) Roman satirist
- KANT, IMMANUEL (1724–1804) German philosopher, commonly considered the greatest philosopher of modern times, a view Schopenhauer shares. Author of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (*Critique of Pure Reason*) (1781 and 1787), *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (*Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals*) (1785) and *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (*Critique of Practical Reason*) (1788) among other works, Kant is the most important single influence on Schopenhauer, who especially admires his resolution of the problem of freedom and

- necessity and his idealist account of space and time, but is highly critical of many aspects of Kant's philosophy
- KARL AUGUST (1767–1828) Grand Duke of Saxony-Weimar-Eisenach
- LA FORGE, LOUIS DE (17th cent.) French doctor and Cartesian
- LEIBNIZ, GOTTFRIED WILHELM (1646–1716) German-born philosopher and mathematician, a leading figure in seventeenth-century intellectual life
- LESSING, GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM (1729–81) German dramatist and religious thinker
- LICHTENBERG, GEORG CHRISTOPH (1742–99) German satirical writer, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Göttingen
- LOCKE, JOHN (1632–1704) English philosopher, important as first British empiricist, author of *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*
- LONGINUS (1st cent. AD) Greek author of *On the Sublime* (also called *De sublimitate*), a work wrongly attributed to Cassius Longinus, third-century rhetorician and philosopher
- LUCIAN (Lukianos) (born c. 120) Author of Greek satiric dialogues
- LUTHER, MARTIN (1483–1546) German Protestant theologian of great influence
- MAINE DE BIRAN, FRANÇOIS PIERRE GAUTHIER (1766–1824) French philosopher
- MALEBRANCHE, NICOLAS (1638–1715) French theologian and Cartesian philosopher
- MANDEVILLE, BERNARD (1670–1733) French author of *The Fable of the Bees*
- MARQUIS POSA Character in Schiller's drama *Don Carlos* (1787)
- MATEO, PEDRO (16th cent.) Spanish poet
- MEISTER, JOHANN CHRISTIAN FRIEDRICH (1758–1828) German Professor of Law
- MENG-TSEU (Mencius, Mengzi) (372–289 BC) Chinese philosopher, follower of Confucius
- MERCK, JOHANN HEINRICH (1741–91) German military adviser
- MERCURY Roman god
- MIDAS Legendary king of Phrygia who grew ass's ears
- MILTON, JOHN (1608–74) English poet, author of *Paradise Lost*
- MOHAMMEDANS Alternative description for Muslims
- MONTAIGNE, MICHEL EYQUEM DE (1533–92) French philosopher and essayist
- MOSES The prophet of the Old Testament
- MÜLLER, JOHANNES VON (1752–1809) German historian and statesman
- MURATORI, LUDOVICO ANTONIO (1672–1750) Italian historian
- NEMESIUS (fl. c. 390–400) Early Christian thinker, author of *De natura hominis* (*On the Nature of Man*)
- NEOPLATONISTS (3rd–7th cent.) A later school of Platonic philosophers
- NERO, LUCIUS DOMITIUS (37–68) Roman emperor famed for egoism and vanity
- NERVA, MARCUS COCCEIUS (15–98) Roman emperor
- NEWTON, ISAAC (1632–1727) The great English mathematician, physicist and astronomer
- NIMROD A great hunter in Hebrew legend

- ORELLI, JOHANN KONRAD (1770–1826) Editor of *Opuscula Graecorum veterum sententiosa et moralia* (*Short Sententious and Moral Works of the Ancient Greeks*) (1819)
- PAUL, SAINT (died c. 64) Apostle and one of the first Christian theologians
- PAULINUS (c. 353–431) Poet and Bishop of Nola
- PAUSANIAS (*fl.* c. 150) Greek travel writer
- PELAGIUS (*fl.* c. 400) Initiator of a movement in Christian thought that emphasized free will as opposed to divine grace
- PERICLES (493–429 BC) Athenian statesman
- PERNER, IGNAZ (1796–1867) German Councillor and campaigner for protection of animals
- PETER, SAINT (died c. 67) Apostle of Jesus in the New Testament
- PETRARCH (Petrarca), FRANCESCO (1304–74) Italian poet and scholar
- PHOCION (c. 402–318 BC) Athenian general
- PLATO (427–347 BC) The great Greek philosopher, of immense influence on subsequent philosophy, and one of Schopenhauer's most important influences
- PLINY THE YOUNGER (Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus) (c. 61 – c. 112) Roman author of literary letters
- PLOTINUS (204–70) Neoplatonist philosopher
- PLUTARCH (46–125) Greco-Roman statesman and historian
- POLEY, LUDWIG (Louis) (*fl.* 1840) Translator of the *Upanishads*
- PORPHYRY (c. 233–309) Neoplatonist philosopher
- PRIESTLEY, JOSEPH (1733–1804) English theologian, philosopher and scientist
- PTOLEMY (c. 100–170) Leading ancient astronomer
- PÜCKLER-MUSKAU, HERMANN LUDWIG HEINRICH, PRINCE OF (1785–1871) German writer
- PYRRHONISTS Sceptical school in ancient Greek philosophy
- PYTHAGORAS (c. 570 – c. 497 BC) Early Greek sage, founder of Pythagorean tradition in philosophy
- PYTHAGOREANS Greek philosophers, mathematics and music theorists in the tradition founded by Pythagoras
- RAMMOHUN ROY (1772–1833) Indian socio-religious reformer, translator of the *Vedas*
- RAMUS, PETER (Pierre de la Ramée) (1515–72) French humanist and mathematician
- REINHOLD, CARL LEONHARD (1758–1823) Professor of Philosophy in Jena, Kant's first disciple
- RÖER, HANS HEINRICH EDUARD Translator of Indian texts including the *Upanishads*
- ROSENKRANZ, JOHANN CARL FRIEDRICH (1805–79) Professor in Königsberg, editor of Kant's works (1838–40)
- ROUSSEAU, JEAN JACQUES (1712–78) French writer of the Enlightenment
- SCHELLING, FRIEDRICH WILHELM JOSEPH VON (1775–1854) Philosopher of German Idealism and Romanticism, much criticized by Schopenhauer, though with somewhat more respect than Hegel and Fichte

- SCHILLER, JOHANN CHRISTOPH FRIEDRICH (1759–1803) German poet, dramatist and aesthetician
- SCHLEGEL, AUGUST WILHELM VON (1767–1845) German philologist, poet, aesthetician and translator
- SCOTT, WALTER (1771–1823) Scottish novelist
- SENECA, LUCIUS ANNAEUS (4 BC – AD 65) Roman poet and Stoic thinker, committed suicide at the instigation of Nero
- SEXTUS EMPIRICUS (*fl. c.* 200) Greek sceptical philosopher
- SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM (1564–1616) The great English dramatist and poet
- SINON In the legend of Troy, the Greek who persuaded the Trojans to take the wooden horse into their city
- SMITH, ADAM (1723–90) Scottish philosopher and founder of political economy
- SOCRATES (470–399 BC) Greek philosopher, teacher of Plato
- SOPHOCLES (*c.* 496–406 BC) Greek tragedian
- SPINOZA, BENEDICT (BARUCH) DE (1632–77) Dutch philosopher of Jewish origin
- STÄUDLIN, KARL FRIEDRICH (1761–1826) German Professor of Theology, author of *Geschichte der Moralphilosophie* (*History of Moral Philosophy*) (1822) and *Geschichte der Lehre von dem Gewissen* (*History of the Doctrine of Conscience*) (1824)
- STOBAEUS, JOHN (5th cent. AD) Author of an anthology of excerpts from previous writers, valuable as a source book for ancient philosophy
- STOICS Major school of Greek philosophy beginning around 300 BC
- SUÁREZ, FRANCISCO (1548–1617) Spanish philosopher and transmitter of mediaeval thought
- SUFIS Members of Muslim mystical movement
- TACITUS, CORNELIUS (*c.* 55–117) Historian of the Roman empire
- TASSO, TORQUATO (1544–95) Italian dramatist
- TIMON OF PHLIUS (*c.* 315 – *c.* 225 BC) Greek poet and sceptical philosopher
- TISSOT, SIMON ANDRÉ (1728–97) Doctor in Lausanne, writer on diet and the supposed dangers of sexual practices
- TITUS FLAVIUS SABINUS VESPASIANUS (41–81) Roman emperor
- TYPHOEUS A giant in Greek legend
- VANINI, LUCILIO (1584–1619) Italian Renaissance thinker
- VAUCANSON (Vaucançon), JACQUES DE (1709–82) Maker of mechanical automata
- VELLEIUS PATERCULUS, MARCUS (19 BC – AD 30) Roman historian
- VESPUCCI, AMERIGO (1451–1512) Italian explorer after whom it used to be thought America was named
- VIRGIL (PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO) (70–19 BC) Leading Roman poet
- VOLTAIRE (François-Marie Arouet) (1694–1778) French thinker central to the Enlightenment
- WAGNER, RUDOLPH (1805–64) German professor of physiology and anthropology

- WINDISCHMANN, FRIEDRICH HEINRICH HUGO (1811–61) German bible scholar and orientalist
- WINKELRIED, ARNOLD VON Swiss hero of the battle of Sempach (1386)
- WOLFF, CHRISTIAN (1679–1754) German Enlightenment philosopher
- WOLLASTON, WILLIAM (1659–1724) English moral philosopher
- WORDSWORTH, WILLIAM (1770–1850) English poet
- ZALEUCUS (c. 650 BC) Reputed as the first Greek lawgiver
- ZIMMERMANN, JOHANN GEORG RITTER VON (1728–95) Swiss doctor and philosopher
- ZOYLUS (4th cent. BC) Cynic philosopher renowned for bitter attacks

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